

IN CAMP
AT
FORT BRADY
A CAMPING STORY



By LEWIS E. THEISS



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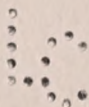
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BY
LEWIS EDWIN THEISS

ILLUSTRATED BY
FRANK T. MERRILL



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IN CAMP AT FORT BRADY



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TO MY WIFE

MARY BARTOL THEISS

THIS VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

She shared in the discovery, during a canoe voyage years ago, of Muncy Farm. When later the place became our own, she shared the pleasure of tracing back the history of each of the separate parcels of land, like John Burrows' fifty acres, that are included within the limits of Muncy Farm. Most of the incidents in the book are based on the writer's own experiences; and in these—the camping, the canoeing, the hikes over the mountains—my wife has been a competent companion. And during the preparation of this book she has generously laid aside her own literary labors to assist in giving to others this simple tale concerning the region we both love so well.

IN CAMP AT FORT BRADY

CHAPTER I

ROY MERCER MAKES A SUGGESTION

“GEE! I wish we had a camp like those West Side boys,” said Roy Mercer, as he laid down a well-thumbed copy of the *Greenkill Annual*.

“So do I,” said Johnnie Lee. “They have an awful lot of fun there.”

Roy picked up his book and went on reading. It was the little volume prepared annually by the Junior members of the West Side Y.M.C.A. of New York City, and it told in detail the story of the summer's fun at the West Side camp near Kingston. Roy finished the book and laid it down. Then he sat staring dreamily out of the window. Before him was the main street of Central City, a bustling little municipality in the central part of Pennsylvania; for he was sitting by the window of the boys' branch of the Central

City Y.M.C.A. But though he looked out on a street filled with traffic, he did not see what was passing in the busy thoroughfare. His thoughts were far away — at the camp in the hills near Kingston.

Roy was only fourteen years old, but he was very quick and active and brimful of fun. Just now he looked doleful as he sat staring out of the window. Presently he turned to the other boys, some of whom were reading while others were playing games, and repeated his suggestion. "Gee! I wish we had a camp! Why can't we?"

"Why can't we?" echoed Henry Harper, who had been sitting with a meditative look on his face ever since Roy first spoke. Henry was sixteen. He was large for his age, very well built, with dark hair and eyes. He seemed even older than he was, for the death of his mother and Henry's increased intimacy with his father had made him more mature than most boys of his age. Henry always did the planning for the crowd. His suggestion of the possibility of a camp, therefore, instantly put an end to the various activities in the room, and all the boys

came flocking around. "It seems to me that we ought to be able to get up a camp for ourselves," said Henry.

"How could we do it?" said Willie Brown, a boy of fourteen, who always distrusted his own ability. "We have n't any place to camp and we have n't any tents or things."

"We can make our own tents or build lean-tos," said Lew Heinsling, a wiry boy of fifteen years, who had made several trips to the Maine woods with his father and was already a good woodsman. "That's easy! But where could we go and how could we start a camp?"

"I don't know," answered Henry. "It would cost lots of money to buy the outfit and I don't know how we could get it. But there *must* be a way. My father says if you want a thing bad enough, you can always get it. Do we want a camp bad enough to try to get it?"

"You bet!" "Sure thing!" "Well I guess!" shouted the boys.

"Then let's talk to Mr. Haskins about it," said Henry, and the entire group went rushing upstairs to the office of the secretary in charge.

"I think we could get an outfit together with-

out very much cost," said Mr. Haskins, after the boys had explained their errand. "The main difficulty would be to find anyone willing to let you occupy his land for a month. Then, too, there's a whole lot of work about running a camp, and we have n't any funds to put into this. If I can arrange for a camp, will you boys do the work?"

"Sure!" was the answer.

"Then come here to-morrow afternoon, and in the meantime I'll see what I can do."

Among the young men who frequented the Y.M.C.A. were a number of college students home for the summer vacation. Mr. Haskins thought that some of these young men might be willing to help the boys out. His plan worked even better than he had hoped it would. Among the men he had in mind were two who proved not only willing to help the boys, but who were able to do a great deal for them. One of these men, James Hardy, was a medical student who had just finished his junior year. The other, William Young, was a junior in the engineering department at Bucknell. Best of all, Mr. Hardy's father owned a beautiful farm on the

banks of the Susquehanna River, and was willing to allow the boys to camp there as long as they wished. So it was arranged that the Central City Juniors should go into camp on Mr. Hardy's farm for one month. "Doctor" Hardy, as the medical student was commonly called, was to be the leader of the camp, with Mr. Young as associate.

When the boys heard this news, they made the rafters ring with their shouts. "Maybe we can catch a fox or a chipmunk," cried Charley Russell with delight; for nothing made him so happy as to be out in the country where he could catch wild animals.

"If we can't catch them, we can shoot them," said Carl Dexter, a lad of fifteen, who had earned quite a reputation as a marksman.

"You can have your old animals," said Robert Martin, a fifteen-year-old boy, who was very fond of swimming. "Me for the water."

"A canoe for mine," shouted Alec Cunningham. "I'll show you fellows how to paddle."

"Will there be any place to play baseball?" asked Jimmy Donnelly, a bright-eyed boy of

fifteen, who was known as the best ball player of his age in Central City.

“Can we catch bass there?” demanded George Larkin.

So it went, everybody shouting out what was uppermost in his mind, until Mr. Hardy called for order. “Now, boys,” he said, “the place I have in mind for a camp is a very fine place and you will like it. But before we take any steps to organize the camp, I want every one of you to promise me to obey orders, to do your camp duties cheerfully, and not to quarrel.”

The new leader paused and looked around the circle of faces. All were bright and smiling but one. Lem Haskins, a boy of sixteen, wore an expression almost of sullenness. The boys could have told Mr. Hardy that this was Lem’s habitual expression and that Lem was no more pleasant than his expression. He was lazy and never did what he was told to do if he could avoid doing it. Mr. Hardy did not know this, of course, for most of the boys were strangers to him; but he noticed the expression and looked keenly at Lem until the latter’s eyes fell in embarrassment.

Mr. Hardy had not intended to say any more, but now he went on: "When people go camping for a month, things always turn up that are disagreeable to some members of the camp. Each one of you must remember that what we are after is the greatest good for the greatest number. If something comes up that you don't like, you must not make a fuss about it. You must try to forget it. We are going to conduct this camp with as little expense as possible. That means that we have to do the work ourselves. If there is any boy here who is not willing to do his share of the work, I don't want him in the camp. Finally, where a number of people act together, someone always has to take charge. That is necessary for the good of the organization. I am going to have charge of this camp. Whatever I tell you to do will be for the good of the whole camp. Some of you will be told to do things you may not want to do. I want you to obey orders cheerfully. I don't want anybody about camp who is sullen. And now," said Mr. Hardy, "do you want to go camping on these terms?"

"Yes!" shouted the boys in chorus.

“Very well,” said Mr. Hardy. Then he announced his plans to the boys.

The main expenses, he told them, would be for food and car fare. The latter item would be slight, as Central City was less than fifty miles from the camp ground. The cost for food would be no more than the cost of maintenance at home. The boys would have to employ a cook, but as one could be secured for a dollar a day, the cost to each boy would be slight. Mr. Hardy said that he could secure a very good cook that the boys would like, through the assistance of farmer Robinson, who tilled the Hardy farm. That would save car fare for the cook.

“As for the camp outfit,” said Mr. Hardy, “there are two good-sized wall tents, two smaller tents, and two tent-flies that belong to the Y.M.C.A. We can use the larger fly for a dining tent, the smaller one for a cooking tent, and the smallest tent for a storehouse. The three other tents will accommodate nine boys. Including the cook, Mr. Young, and myself, there will be fifteen in camp, so you will need tent room for six more boys. I think I know where I can borrow three small wall tents, so that

takes care of the canvas. Major Rogers of the National Guard has agreed to lend us fifteen cots, provided that we will be responsible for any damage. I shall have two collapsible stoves made of galvanized sheet iron, but the secretary says that the Association will pay for them, as they will be useful in future camps.

“The rest of the equipment,” continued Mr. Hardy, “you will have to provide yourselves. We shall need dishes, cooking utensils, wearing apparel, bedding, and whatever outfit for sports you choose to take; only you must not take too much.”

Then Mr. Hardy gave each boy a typewritten list of the articles he must provide. Each was to bring two blankets, a paper of large safety pins, a sweater, four pairs of stockings, with thread and needle for darning them, three sets of underwear, three shirts, two pairs of stout shoes with thick soles, a bathing suit, a cap or hat, handkerchiefs, three towels, a scrubbing brush, a washcloth, a toothbrush with tooth powder and soap, a brush and a comb, two square little bags that buttoned up — one to put miscellaneous articles in and one to use as a pillow after

stuffing — a clean, bright lard pail, and a strong pocketknife.

In addition each boy was required to bring a certain number of dishes and cooking utensils. All these articles were to be brought to the Y.M.C.A., where they could be sorted and packed in boxes for transportation. Steamer trunks were readily procured, and one trunk was provided for every two boys. It was planned to start for camp on Monday, the fifth day of July. In the week that intervened the cots had all to be examined and tied in bundles, the tents to be gone over, the ropes examined, poles provided where they were missing, and stakes made of stout wood. The two rowboats and the four canoes, owned by various members of the party, were to be crated and sent ahead by freight.

Mr. Hardy, who was an experienced camper, paid especial attention to the preparation of the "hardware box," as he dubbed it. For this he secured several good axes and hatchets, a spade, some rope and wire, an assortment of nails, a carborundum stone, and various other tools and supplies that he knew would be necessary. Mr. Hardy also got together a complete first-aid kit,

some books, a few games, and some balls, bats, and gloves.

Mr. Hardy had made complete lists of everything required. He checked off the lists as the boys brought in the things. Meantime he and Mr. Young, because they could handle tools better, did most of the packing. In this work they found Roy Mercer a great help. He was as bright as a sunbeam and as active as a cat. He handled tools like a born carpenter and it was never necessary to check up his work. He did exactly what he was told to do and he did it right. Henry Harper proved very useful in the collection of things. He took charge of that work, assigning the boys to various tasks and looking after the details in an able manner. "That boy's a born executive," said Mr. Hardy. And so Henry became first lieutenant. Every boy in the group was on the jump excepting Lem Haskins, who would a good deal rather play games than carry heavy bundles. But Henry kept after him and gave him little opportunity to shirk.

For a week Central City was full of boys carrying bundles. The big storeroom at the

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Y.M.C.A. looked like an auction room. But order gradually came out of chaos, and the jumble was reduced to regular piles of boxes, bundles, bales of tents, stacks of cots, and trunks and suit cases. The boats were early crated and hauled to the railroad station. Long before Saturday night arrived everything was in readiness. To the twelve impatient boys it seemed as though Monday would never come.

CHAPTER II

MAKING CAMP

BUT it did come at last, and it brought with it bright, clear weather, with just breeze enough to temper the heat. Every one of the campers reached the Y.M.C.A. building long before the hour set. The wagon that was to take the heavier luggage to the station appeared and was soon piled high. As Mr. Hardy had foreseen, every one of the campers wanted to take more stuff than could possibly be carried. The trunks were bulging full and a number of suit cases had also been pressed into service. Even then there remained for the boys to carry a dozen bundles and all the blankets. The latter were tied up in rolls to be borne over the shoulders like horseshoes.

At first all was confusion. Roy Mercer was everywhere at once, like a fox terrier; but he always knew what he was doing and was as useful as he was busy. Lew Heinsling, quiet as usual, made sure that the camp tools were not

forgotten. Willie Brown could hardly yet believe they were actually going camping. Everybody talked at once, and Charley Russell kept them laughing by his imitations of a chipmunk.

But finally Henry Harper got the boys lined up, saw to it each had his blanket roll, and led the way to the station, with Mr. Hardy and Mr. Young coming along in the rear. "Halt!" said Henry, when they reached the station. Before they could break ranks Mr. Hardy stepped up.

"When you get on the train, boys," he said, "take your blankets and your bundles to your seats with you. Put your bundles in the racks overhead. Sit together wherever you can find the seats. Don't forget your bundles when we reach Muncy."

Then the train came rushing in, and the boys, with a cheer, climbed aboard. Roy Mercer, as usual, was first. He and Johnnie Lee, who were great chums, got a seat together at the forward end of the car. The others came pushing in. Lem Haskins dragged along in the rear. Instead of hoisting his bundle to the rack above, he dropped it and his blanket in a vacant seat in the rear of the car.

In half an hour the train reached the valley of the West Branch of the Susquehanna and steamed steadily northward, for an hour more, up the west bank. Often the cars were close beside the water. The broad river, sparkling in the sunlight, here rushing over shallows and there lingering lazily in deep pools, was very different from the muddy little stream at Central City.

"Gee! I'll bet it's full of fish," said George Larkin.

"Bully for swimming," cried Robert Martin.

"How'd you like to shoot that?" Alec Cunningham yelled back to Carl Dexter as the train was passing a pretty little rapid.

Presently the train curved to the right, thundered over a long bridge, beneath which the water was leaping in swirling rapids, then turned sharply upstream again, and in a moment more the brakeman was shouting, "All out for Muncy."

The boys grabbed their bundles and clambered out. An enormous farm wagon was drawn up by the station, and in it were a big man in overalls, with the jolliest face imaginable, and a boy of fifteen, who sat beside him on the seat. They

were farmer Robinson and his only child, Teddy. Both of them seemed more than glad to see Mr. Hardy. Mr. Robinson wrung his hand hard and Teddy fairly hugged him. "You're more than welcome to Muncy Farm," said the big farmer. Then the luggage was piled in the wagon and the boys headed southward and started on their first hike — a two-mile march to camp.

The last mile of the way lay along the bank of the river, which was now on their right. Presently Mr. Hardy turned sharply to the left and led the boys through a field along a path that followed the course of a brook. The ground sloped upward, gently at first, and then more sharply. The path entered some woods. The grade was now steep and the boys began to breathe hard under their bundles. Suddenly a rocky ledge, thirty feet high, that extended along the face of the hill in each direction, barred the path. Mr. Hardy turned to the right along the foot of this ledge. Shortly a great cleft in the rock appeared. The boys scrambled up through this gateway and found themselves on a sort of level promontory that thrust itself out from the brow of the hill like a huge nose. Here was a

clearing of about an acre, evidently very old, for the stumps were almost all rotted away and the ground was covered with a fine sod. From below, the place was not visible, but one standing in the clearing could look out over the tree tops beneath. The scene that lay before them made the boys shout with admiration.

The campers were looking straight across the valley and facing northwest. At their feet were the steep hill and the sloping field up which they had just toiled. Parallel with the ridge on which they were standing ran the river, which here flowed from northeast to southwest. Evidently it was deep, for its surface was without a ripple. Mr. Hardy told them that at this point the stream was about a thousand feet wide.

The farther bank of the river was heavily timbered, the trees apparently being left standing to protect the bank from floods; for beyond the fringe of timber, plowed fields extended in every direction. This rich bottom-land, now golden with grain and green with corn, stretched back from the river for several miles, sloping gradually upward into a great mountain ridge.

This ridge, which Mr. Hardy said was Bald

Eagle Mountain, stretched to the southwest as far as the eye could see; but almost abreast of the camp it came to an abrupt termination, turning sharply downward, like the nose of a fish. From their elevated station the boys could see that the river, after continuing northward for a mile or two, described a wide curve and swung around on the other side of Bald Eagle Mountain.

The semicircular valley thus formed was completely walled in on the north by mountains, which rose tier upon tier, like some vast amphitheater of nature. The nearest line of hills was cultivated, some of the fields extending quite to the summit. This checkerboard of hillside fields, some brown, some yellow, some green, with the great arc of the river flowing below, stood out in the sunlight so beautifully that for a moment the campers were silent in wonder.

The view to the south, though very different, was equally striking. Between Bald Eagle and the river lay a long reach of farming land, with the little town of Montgomery shining in the sunlight some four miles downstream. The river itself widened as it flowed southward, until, at a

distance of two miles, it was perhaps three times as wide as it was immediately in front of the camp.

The ridge on which the campers were standing drew rapidly closer to the water, until the fields disappeared and the mountain rose, a jagged, rocky precipice, sheer from the river's edge. Its threatening face was dotted with evergreens that had sprung up in every crevice of rock where their roots could find lodgment.

Still farther to the southward the river swung sharply to the left and was lost behind this towering precipice. It appeared to have come to an abrupt end, and the broad reach of the stream below the camp seemed more like a lake than a flowing river.

"Well, boys, how do you like it?" asked Mr. Hardy, who had been smiling as he watched the looks of wonderment.

"Bully!" "Great!" "Out of sight!" shouted the boys in chorus. Then Lew Heinsling spoke up.

"Where are we going to get drinking water, Mr. Hardy?" he asked quietly.

"Good for you, Lew!" said Mr. Hardy. "I

wondered who would be the first to ask the question. Come over here."

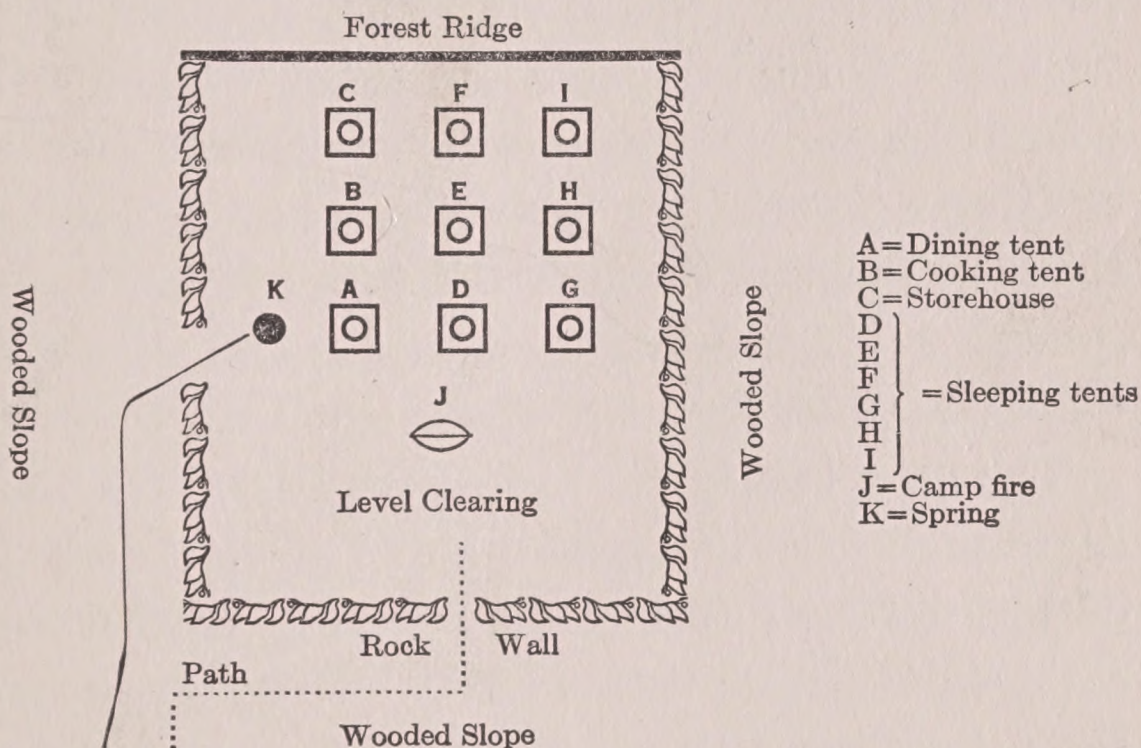
He led the way to the middle of the north side of the clearing, where, in the shade of a rock, a stream of water gushed forth and went gurgling away through the grass. "This is a very famous spring," remarked Mr. Hardy, "and when we have more time, I will tell you its story. Just now we must get to work on the camp." From his pocket he drew forth a piece of paper showing a sketch of a hillside camp.

"That's this very clearing," exclaimed Lew Heinsling.

"It is," said Mr. Hardy. "Mr. Young planned the camp the day we decided to come." He spread the piece of paper on a bundle and the boys crowded round. The plan looked very much like the one on the opposite page.

"You see," explained Mr. Hardy, after the boys had examined the plan carefully, "we are to put the dining tent next to the spring, and the cooking tent back of that, with the storehouse just behind the cooking tent. We have six sleeping tents, and Mr. Young has arranged these in two rows. Altogether we shall have three rows

of tents with three tents in a row. We shall put them in regular order in the rear half of the clearing, like a kind of military camp. That will keep the front half of the clearing open. We are going to be in camp such a long time that I



think it will be best to have board floors for our tents.”

“ There ’s a pile of lumber up there at the edge of the clearing,” broke in Charley Russell, whose sharp eyes never missed anything. Mr. Hardy smiled approval. “ Yes,” he said, “ I asked Mr. Robinson to bring the boards here, when I wrote him about our coming.”

“How did he ever get them up the rocks?” piped up Johnnie Lee.

“Wait a bit and you’ll see,” answered Mr. Hardy.

Just then the rattle of wheels was heard. The boys turned toward the river, but no team was visible. A minute later the farm wagon appeared among the trees on the upper side of the clearing. The farmer had followed a wood road that led upward through the forest at an easy grade. He drove into the clearing and the luggage was unloaded at a convenient spot.

The next two hours were busy ones. On the camp plan Mr. Young had noted down the sizes of the different tents. The smaller ones were eight by ten feet; two were twelve by fourteen feet; the dining fly was a huge sheet of canvas eighteen by thirty-two feet. Mr. Hardy handed a tape to Roy Mercer. “I want you and Johnnie Lee to pick out the boards for the various floors,” he said. “You may make the floor of the dining tent eighteen by twenty feet.”

Roy and Johnnie immediately ran over to the lumber pile and began to measure and sort out the boards and the planks.

“Does anyone know how to fix up a spring?” inquired Mr. Hardy.

“I do,” said Lew Heinsling.

“Then take Carl Dexter with you and fix this spring so we can get water without difficulty. Mr. Young will stake out the locations for the tents,” continued Mr. Hardy, “and I want you, Henry, to take charge of assembling each tent.”

Henry at once set some of the boys to work carrying the boards for the floors and stacking them in the locations indicated by Mr. Young. He had Willie Brown open the bundle containing the tent pegs and distribute the necessary number of pegs at each tent site. Robert Martin brought the poles. Other boys were opening the tents and carrying each canvas to its appointed place.

Meantime Lew and Carl were fixing up the spring. They found that the ground sloped rapidly away on that side of the clearing. Here a number of trees had sprung up within the clearing, doubtless encouraged by the flow of water. In the shade of one of these trees the two boys found an excellent place to build a reservoir where the stream had eaten its way deep into

the earth. The spot was so close to the spring itself that the water was still cold and sparkling. Here they scooped out a deep basin and dammed up the outlet with rocks and earth. They had already cut a piece of chestnut sapling an inch and a half in diameter and two feet long. The bark of this they slit longitudinally along one side and carefully peeled it from the wood. They then tied the bark together in its original form, making a perfect tube. This was built into the breast of the dam about four inches below the surface of the impounded water, which at once began to run through the pipe in a strong, steady flow. Flat stones were placed beneath the outflow to prevent the soil from washing away. By placing a pail under the chestnut pipe it was now possible to obtain water without in any manner disturbing the reservoir. In fact it was just like drawing it from a faucet at home.

Under Henry's direction Jimmy Donnelly had opened the camp tool chest. When Mr. Hardy saw that he said to Jimmy, "I'm going to appoint you custodian of tools. I want you to count the tools now and see that they are kept in their places. That is a very important task."

“Right!” sang out Lew Heinsling, who had overheard the conversation. “My father almost lost his life once because the camp hatchet was lost.”

In a very short time the boards and the planks for the tent floors were assembled. Hatchets and nails were gotten out, and under the supervision of Mr. Young the floors were speedily made, put in place, and leveled. George Larkin drove home the last nail.

“Gee! but I’m hungry,” he said as he threw down his hatchet.

“You have a right to be,” said Mr. Hardy. “It’s dinner time.”

A shout went up which was succeeded by a look of dismay. The cook had not arrived and the camp supplies were still nailed up. Mr. Hardy stood grinning for a moment. “It’s all right, boys,” he said, “Mrs. Robinson is going to give us our dinner.”

She did, and none of the boys will ever forget that dinner. “Gee! I feel like a bass drum,” said Johnnie Lee. “I don’t believe I’ll be able to get back through that gateway in the rocks.” Everybody laughed. Mr. Hardy let the boys

eat all they wanted to, and Mrs. Robinson, the motherliest kind of a woman, kept filling up their plates until they could eat no more. During the meal Teddy and Lew struck up a friendship that was destined to last not only through the month of camp, but throughout their whole lives, and that was to become an important factor in the life of each. The two were seated beside each other at table, and their liking for each other came about naturally enough; for Lew, as we already know, was skilled in woodcraft, and Teddy had that love for outdoor things that every country boy feels, and the ability to take care of himself under almost any conditions in the open.

As soon as they were back at camp Mr. Young picked out a tent-raising crew. Under his direction four pegs were driven temporarily into the soil to hold the four corner guy ropes of a tent. The poles were inserted within the tent, which was immediately raised and held in place on its platform, while the permanent stakes for the guy ropes were quickly driven home under the experienced eye of Mr. Young. Then the guy ropes were drawn taut and the tent gang turned

to the next canvas. Under this efficient plan tent after tent rose into the air and the entire nine were soon erected.

The stakes had been driven down in very straight rows and the tents guyed up exactly plumb. The little encampment presented such a neat, regular appearance that when the tent crew drew off a little to look at their work, they shouted with delight. Nondescript as the outfit was, the tents had been erected so skillfully that the camp presented a much better appearance than does many a camp with a far better outfit. Mr. Young smiled with pleasure at the boys' evident appreciation of his work.

"You see, boys," he said, "when a thing's worth doing at all, it's worth doing well."

The creation of the camp, this actual embodiment of their dreams, had an inspiring effect on the campers. They fell to with redoubled vigor. The place fairly hummed with activity and the whole hillside resounded with happy voices. Even Lem Haskins, who all the morning had seemed distraught and without interest in the work, caught the spirit and joined in with right good will.

Now came the making of the camp furniture. It was necessary to build a big dining table and two smaller side tables, with two long benches for the dining tent, and a couple of small tables with a bench for the cook's tent. There were more than enough boards and planks remaining for this purpose, and under the direction of Mr. Young the desired pieces were soon created. They were strong and square and really looked very well.

Meantime two of the boys had been unpacking the cots and setting them up in the various tents. Mr. Hardy allotted the tents. The two boys who shared a trunk were, of course, tent mates. In one of the larger tents two sets of boys were placed. That left the other big tent for Mr. Hardy, Mr. Young, and the cook. As soon as the cots were set up the trunks were carried into the tents. Each boy took his blanket roll into his tent and ropes were tied between the poles of each tent to hang things on. The various bundles were opened and the contents distributed. The stores were neatly piled in the storehouse. The camp began to look very orderly.

Mr. Young now had Lew and Carl build a little wall of stone and earth on each side of the stream between the spring and the reservoir, to shut out surface water. Just below the reservoir he had them dig out a channel fifteen inches wide and about four feet long and six inches deep. Flat stones were embedded in the bottom of this channel, and the whole was enclosed in a specially built box with a hinged lid. This was the camp "ice box," in which to keep perishable foods.

The two galvanized-iron stoves, which were much like those made for campers by sporting-goods houses, were assembled. Of course, in these homemade stoves the sides were not hinged, and so the different parts had to be bolted together. This was soon done and the little stove-pipes were run out beyond the fly used as a cooking tent. Meantime Mr. Hardy had given half a dozen of the larger boys axes and hatchets and had set them to work turning a nearby dead tree into firewood. They worked so vigorously that before very long a great stack of wood was piled up under one edge of the cooking tent.

Mr. Young now examined the camp site care-

fully and finally constructed a latrine on the side of the camp opposite the spring and part way down the slope, just outside the line of the clearing. Jimmy Donnelly and George Larkin dug the trench for him.

"Now, boys," said Mr. Hardy when all this was done, "I think the camp is about complete. Let's take a look at it."

The boys ran down to the front of the clearing, just above the rock wall, where they had previously stood to view the valley; now, facing in the opposite direction, they admired their camp. And indeed they had much to admire, for under the skillful direction of their leaders they had made a very snug-looking camp, with the tents standing in regular rows just in front of the forest, and the ridge towering up behind. The boys set up a great shout.

"Hurrah for Roy Mercer," cried one of the boys. "He suggested this camp."

"Hurrah for me nothin'," answered Roy. "I say, Hurrah for Henry. If it had n't been for him we'd never had this camp."

Then Henry spoke up. "Three cheers for Mr. Hardy and Mr. Young," he called.

“They ’re the ones we owe the camp to.” Even the mountain joined in the cheer that followed, for it flung back an echo that started the boys to further cheering.

“We’re not quite through yet,” said Mr. Hardy when the boys had tested the echo to their hearts’ content. “We have still a wharf to build. We can finish that this afternoon and the boats can be brought down to-morrow morning.” There still remained a few planks and boards. These the boys carried to the shore, where a short distance upstream they found a sandy little cove, protected from the current by a rocky point thrusting well out into the stream. The cove was an ideal place to keep the boats and the end of the point was excellent for swimming, because the water was deep there. On the point farmer Robinson had placed two water-tight barrels that had once contained oil. Under the direction of Mr. Young long planks were fastened to these, cross-boards laid, and the whole thrust out into the stream with the ends of the planks fastened to the shore. The float was then moored by stout ropes running both up and down stream and the wharf was done. The camp was complete.

CHAPTER III

THE CAMP FIRE

ALREADY the sun was dropping behind Bald Eagle Mountain in a great ball of fire that colored the haze of evening. A faint crimson hue suffused all the valley, while the mountain itself stood out gray-blue in the background. The long twilight of summer was just beginning.

The campers gathered together their tools and started up the hill. A thin column of smoke was faintly discernible against the green background of the forest. In astonishment the boys looked at one another, for though not all of them had been needed in the construction of the wharf, every member of the party had come down to the water's edge. The smoke quickened their pace and very shortly the foremost were scrambling through the rocky gateway up to the level of the plateau, which was perhaps two thousand feet from the river bank.

They saw that the smoke issued from the cook-

ing tent. On a box in front of the camp, where he had evidently been watching the operations at the riverside, sat a man now intently regarding the beautiful sunset. His right leg was crossed over his left knee. But instead of a foot there projected from his right trousers leg a large round peg. Evidently his leg had been cut off somewhere between the knee and the ankle. As the boys drew closer they saw that his nose had been broken, for it was badly twisted. A great scar ran down the left side of his face. He wore no hat and his bushy hair stood up in great black ringlets. His eyes were dark and piercing. He had a big bristling mustache. Altogether he was so fierce looking that the boys hesitated to approach him. His first words reassured them, however.

“Hello, boys,” he drawled with the friendliest inflection, and in a voice so full and deep that he could have been heard a mile away.

“That’s the cook,” said Mr. Hardy to Mr. Young as the two, bringing up the rear of the procession, had just reached the edge of the woods. He hurried up to the camp ground and over to the newcomer, who rose to greet him.

"Mighty glad to see you, Al," said Mr. Hardy as he shook the stranger's hand warmly. Then turning to the rest of the campers, he said: "Boys, I want to introduce our cook, Mr. Jordan."

"Just call me Al," replied the cook in his friendly tones. Henry Harper stepped forward and shook hands with him. The others followed his example, and though the big cook had little to say to them, he won the heart of every boy in the group. His face lighted up with a smile that completely transformed his appearance. The boys forgot the crooked nose, the livid scar, and the piratical expression; for when he smiled, Al Jordan's face was wonderfully expressive of his big heart.

"I knowed you'd be hungry," he said, turning to Mr. Hardy, "so you see I got things under way." He waved his hand toward the smoking fires, and the boys now noticed that a number of boxes had been brought out of the storehouse and opened, and that the dining table was already set. Two big pots were boiling on the stove.

By the time supper was over twilight was

rapidly deepening into darkness. In the open space in front of the tents the boys had made a great fireplace ringed in by stones. Wood for the camp fire, cut in larger pieces than the cook's wood, had also been prepared by the axe brigade. There had been no time, however, to pile the wood ready for lighting. Before this was fetched Mr. Hardy called the campers together.

"There are still a few poisonous snakes left in this neighborhood," he said. "Rattlesnakes have been exterminated, but copperheads are still seen occasionally. At this time of the year they are often abroad at night. We shall have to be careful where we tread after dark, therefore, and I make it a rule of this camp that no one shall go about at night without a light. Now bring your lard pails."

A minute later the boys were back with their shining pails and waiting in expectation. Mr. Hardy took one of the pails. He opened his strong camp knife and in the center of one side of the pail made an X-shaped cut a little more than an inch across. The four triangular points left by the incision he pushed in with his finger. Exactly opposite this opening he cut a small

round hole in the other side of the pail. Then he removed the bail, stretched it out a little, and hooked it just above this second opening, with one end of the bail at the top and the other at the bottom of the can. "If this can had been flat on the bottom," he explained, "so that there was no place to hook the bail, I should have punched a hole to hook it in." From a box of supplies he took out a candle and thrust it through the opening he had first made. The bent-in points of tin held the candle firmly. He struck a match and lighted the candle. In a few seconds it was burning brightly and throwing a strong beam of light wherever the can was pointed.

"There, you see, we have a first-class light," said Mr. Hardy. "I knew we should need a great many lights, and as we had n't enough lanterns I asked you to bring the lard pails. This is what is called in the West a 'palouser.' You can push the candle up as it burns. It will give you a good light and, strange though it may seem, it will never blow out. Now I want you to be sure never to stir abroad after dark without your lights."

The boys were eager to test the new device. They got out their knives, and using Mr. Hardy's palouser as a model, soon had their own pails transformed and their candles burning brightly.

"This reminds me," Mr. Hardy said a minute later, "I have n't seen the first-aid kit since we got here. Will you see if you can find it?"

The boys scattered to their tents and made the first practical test of their new palousers. But they came back empty-handed. The kit was nowhere to be found. Mr. Hardy looked serious. "Can it be that we failed to bring it?" he asked. "It was a square package with a red cross in one corner. Does anyone remember seeing it?"

"I do," said Henry Harper. "I gave it to Lem Haskins when I distributed the bundles this morning."

Every eye was turned toward Lem. He had been standing behind the others, and now he hung his head.

"What about this?" inquired Mr. Hardy. "Did you have this package?"

"Y-es, sir," faltered Lem.

“Then what has become of it?”

“I put it in the seat with my blanket, and when we reached Muncy it was gone.”

Mr. Hardy looked very stern. “Did n’t you hear me tell you to put your bundles in the racks overhead?”

“Yes,” said Lem faintly.

“Then you have willfully disobeyed orders. Suppose one of us were to be hurt now, what should we do? You should have told me about this the minute you found it was gone.”

“I — I did n’t know it was the first-aid kit,” said Lem.

“You have endangered the lives of all these boys by your disobedience,” continued Mr. Hardy. “I want to think the situation over before I decide what shall be done to you. Meantime I shall order another first-aid kit, and let us hope that no one will get hurt.”

The little cloud that came over the camp with this episode was soon lifted. The wood was brought, skillfully piled up under the direction of Lew Heinsling, with birch bark and dry twigs at the bottom and heavy sticks of oak piled above in cone-shaped formation, and a match

applied. In a few minutes more the flames were leaping high, lighting up the whole clearing.

Many of the boys had never before spent a night in the open. It was all new and impressive to them. Behind them the white canvas and the dark foliage of the forest threw back the gleam of the firelight. Before them lay the illumined clearing and beyond that a dark void. Not a single glimpse of the wonderful landscape they had looked on a few hours earlier could now be had. They were high in the air, looking out into infinite darkness. Above, the stars shone brightly, and here and there in the darkness below them twinkled solitary lights, as though the earth were reflecting the gleam of the lights in heaven. The shouts that followed the lighting of the fire quickly subsided and the boys sat silent under the influence of these strange surroundings. Now they could hear a gentle whispering in the trees, a thousand little noises of night life in the open, and the roaring of the rapids at the bridge, which had been indistinguishable among the noises of the day. Suddenly something darted past the camp fire and some of the boys started nervously. In a mo-

ment they knew what it was, for from a near-by tree came the eery cry of a whippoorwill.

“Let’s have a story,” said Roy Mercer.

“A story!” everybody cried in unison. “Mr. Hardy, a story!”

“Very well, boys. What shall it be?” replied the leader of the camp.

“Tell us the story of the spring,” suggested Lew Heinsling.

“It’s a pretty long story,” said Mr. Hardy, “because, to understand it right, I shall have to tell you the tale of this whole valley. Do you want to hear it?”

“An Indian story!” yelled the boys with delight, sensing what was coming.

“Yes, there’s a good deal about Indians in it,” replied Mr. Hardy. “But the story is probably more enjoyable in the telling than it was in the making.” He paused a moment in thought. “You have all studied American history,” he went on, “and you know that it was nearly a hundred years after the white men began to settle along the ocean that they pushed their way back into these mountains. You see, there were then no roads, as you understand the term, that

led westward. There were no farms or fields. There was no food to be had excepting such as the traveler could get from the streams or the forest, and the traveler had to carry most of his provisions. So you see why it was that these mountains remained so long unpeopled by the palefaces.

“There was still another reason for this. In Pennsylvania the white men did not take away the Indians’ land by force, as was done in some of the other colonies, but they purchased the land, bit by bit, as it was needed for settlement. It was not until the year 1768 that the land along this valley was purchased from the Indians by the Penns. So you see that at the time of the Revolutionary War, when there were cities along the seacoast, such as Boston and Philadelphia and New York and Baltimore, there were only a few scattered settlers in this valley. This was then the frontier.

“When we reached camp this morning, we looked out over this valley, which is so wonderfully beautiful that some of you could not find words to express your pleasure and admiration. Do you know the name of this valley? It is

called the Black Hole Valley. It does not look much like a black hole now, does it? But when the first white settlers came into these mountains and looked out over this valley, it appeared so desolate and forbidding that they called it the Black Hole. It was full of swampy places and dense thickets, and the forest was so heavy that the very sunlight was shut out. But the settlers stayed here. They began to open little clearings in the forest, to till the soil, to build themselves houses of logs. That was because they had faith. They pictured to themselves a time when the forest should be cut away, the swamps drained, and this valley filled with prosperous farms, just as you have seen it to-day."

Another whippoorwill fluttered past the fire and darted so close to Willie Brown's nose that he fell over on his back in a start. The boys laughed and began to tease him. "Keep still," said George Larkin, "we want to hear about this spring."

Mr. Hardy had been laughing too. When the boys were quiet again, he said: "One of the early settlers was a man named John Burrows. As a mere boy he had fought in the Revolutionary

War. General Washington made his headquarters in the home of John Burrows' father just before the battle of Trenton. And little John, who was then sixteen years old — no older than some of you — crossed the Delaware River with General Washington on Christmas night of 1776 and took part in the battle of Trenton, the first battle won by the Continental Army. For fourteen months he was an express rider for General Washington. In after years he became a major general of the Pennsylvania militia. Like all these early settlers, John Burrows was a man of tremendous physical power and indomitable courage. A few years after the Revolution was over he moved with his family into this valley, bringing with him perhaps the fine horse that General Washington, as a token of his esteem, had given him to replace the horse that was shot under him at the battle of Monmouth.

“ He arrived here in April of 1794 and for six months had to live in a log cabin sixteen feet square — a building only a trifle larger than my tent — which was already occupied by a family of eight persons. With him were his wife and five children, so that fifteen people lived in this

one hut. It was almost a town in itself. But in November he moved to this very farm, where he had meantime been building a log house for himself.

“ Most of the land hereabout had by this time been purchased by settlers, but there was still one piece of fifty acres open to purchase. That fifty acres contained some fine bottom-land and a wonderful spring. That spring is the one from which you boys get your water. John Burrows had a neighbor who also wanted this fifty acres of land. As the land still belonged to the Penns, it was necessary, in order to get it, to go to the land office in Philadelphia and file application for the land.

“ The other claimant started for Philadelphia on a Friday. John Burrows did not discover this until Sunday afternoon. Then he walked thirty miles down the river — the same thirty miles that you traveled to-day on the train after you reached the Susquehanna — and at Sunbury, the county seat, he had the papers drawn up that were to be filed in Philadelphia. From Sunbury to Philadelphia is one hundred and fifty-six miles. Burrows decided that he could

go faster on foot than his rival on horseback, from which fact you may judge what kind of roads there were in those days. Starting early in the morning, he reached Philadelphia late the next night, covering the hundred and fifty-six miles in two days. Early on the morning of the third day he hastened to the land office and had hardly more than filed his application when in came his rival. But Burrows was first and Burrows got the land. Later, as you can see, he opened this clearing and built a better home beside the spring he had won with so much effort."

The boys gave a cheer, and Roy Mercer set them all laughing by running over to the spring and getting a drink of water.

"The Indians!" cried some of the boys, "you did n't tell us anything about them."

"Oh! I'm not done yet," said Mr. Hardy. "I told you this was a long story. I'll come to the Indians presently, but first I want to tell you a little more about General Burrows. To us his walk of a hundred and fifty-six miles in two days, through the wilderness, seems a remarkable achievement. General Burrows probably thought nothing of it, for the pioneers were al-

ways doing feats of this kind. Their muscles were so tough that they could endure almost any amount of exertion. The settlers were so few in number that they had to help each other out, and so they were always performing some act of courage or heroism.

“In the winter of 1802 General Burrows received an appeal from William Wells, who had settled in the woods where Wellsboro now stands, imploring him for food. To reach Wells, General Burrows had to go fifty miles through the wilderness, cross the Alleghany Mountain, fight his way through deep snows, and run the risk of being killed by Indians.”

“Where did he cross them?” asked Lew Heinsling.

“He crossed it, not them,” replied Mr. Hardy. “I said the Alleghany Mountain, meaning one particular peak. All these are the Alleghany Mountains, but the Alleghany Mountain is that high summit just visible in the daytime beyond the cook’s tent — the great ridge to the north that towers above all its neighbors. That’s the mountain General Burrows had to cross. You see it bars the way northward. It is often called

North Mountain. It is the highest peak in this part of Pennsylvania.

“ But General Burrows never hesitated for a minute. He put eighty-eight hundred pounds of pork on two sleds drawn by horses, and with a man to drive the second sled, set off on the perilous journey. While crossing the mountain his assistant froze his feet up to the ankles and had to be left behind. All the pork was put on one sled, the four horses hitched to this, and General Burrows went on alone. He passed the body of a man who had frozen to death the day before.

“ In crossing the ice of Pine Creek the horses broke through and the water came up midside deep on them. In plunging about they pulled the sled into the water. General Burrows got the horses ashore. Then he went under water and got an axe that was fastened to the sled and cut a road through the ice to the shore. Then he went under water again, got a log chain from the sledge, and fastened it to the runners. He backed his horses into the stream where he had cut the ice away, hitched them to the sled, and pulled his pork ashore. By that time it was dark and he had six miles still to go and four times

more to cross the creek before he could reach shelter for the night at a frontier mill. It was midnight when he got there. He had not a dry thread on him and the cold was intense. There was neither stable nor hay for the horses and he was afraid that they would freeze to death.

“ There were still fifteen miles to go, the snow was two feet deep, and there was hardly a track that could be followed. But General Burrows pushed on, and when he was within five miles of Mr. Wells’ house, he met a messenger coming who said he would show him a short cut. The messenger soon lost his way, the sled fell in a hole and upset, and the guide did n’t know which way to turn. By this time it was dark. General Burrows took his horses, and guiding himself by the stars, made his way through the forest to Mr. Wells’ home. The pork was left behind. Mr. Wells had no stable and no feed for the horses, and the log hut in which he lived was so low that General Burrows was unable to stand upright in it. In this tiny house an entire family lived. General Burrows sat by the fire all night. It took him all the next day to get the pork. The following day he started for home.”

“Gee!” ejaculated Roy. “He was n’t afraid of anything, was he?”

“What I have just told you was not exceptional,” continued Mr. Hardy, ignoring the interruption. “In all this valley there were not enough settlers to make a respectable-sized town. These settlers were widely scattered. Sometimes a settler had no neighbor nearer than twenty-five or thirty miles. The fields were only tiny clearings in the forests and the crops often failed. Frequently settlers had to go thirty-five or forty miles to a mill to have their grain ground. And all the time they had to watch out for Indians.

“The women had to bolt the doors of the log houses while they were at work, and the men had to carry their rifles with them in the fields and wherever they went. The forest was so dense that it was very easy for Indians to steal upon settlers while they were at work and shoot them from ambush. Sometimes they would creep upon an isolated hut in the middle of the night, set fire to it, and shoot down the terrified dwellers as they rushed out of the building. Sometimes they would set the grain afire. They would

steal horses and cattle. Often they would take prisoners.

“To defend themselves from the Indians, the settlers organized a company of rangers, commanded by Captain John Brady, the most famous Indian fighter in all this valley. He was the Daniel Boone of this part of the country. He lived right here at Muncy, and his stronghold, Fort Brady, was located within four miles of this spot.”

“Can we visit the place?” spoke up George Larkin, who, more than any other of the boys, loved to learn about the early history of his country.

“Yes, indeed you may,” replied Mr. Hardy, “and I should like to have you visit the place and see a little more of the country hereabout before I tell you the story of Captain John Brady. How would you like to take a tramp over to the site of the fort to-morrow afternoon? We have to get our boats down in the morning, you know.”

“Fine,” shouted the boys, and so a hike to Fort Brady was scheduled for the next afternoon.

By this time the fire had nearly burned itself out, for it had not been replenished during Mr. Hardy's talk. There remained only a bed of glowing embers, which made but little light. So the palousers, which had been blown out, were relighted and the boys went to their tents.

"Get out your safety pins, boys," called out Mr. Hardy.

Then he showed them how to make sleeping bags of their blankets by folding one within the other and pinning the edges together. Two blankets had seemed unnecessary to the boys. Now they were glad that they had them. The mists from the river and the high elevation made their camp a cool place at night. Now that the camp fire had burned out they began to realize it. The day's exertions and the long hours in the open had made them ready for bed. In a few minutes the camp was wrapped in silence.

CHAPTER IV

GETTING THE BOATS TO CAMP

THE sun was just peeping over the ridge behind them when the boys turned out next morning. But early as they were, the cook had beaten them, and already twin columns of smoke were pouring upward from the cooking tent and a savory odor pervaded the air. The boys washed themselves in the cold water of the spring and attacked their breakfast with a will.

After breakfast squad duties were assigned. One squad was to help the cook. They had to prepare the vegetables, wash the dishes, and set the table. This squad also had to keep the food supplies in order and see that all perishable foods were replaced in the spring box.

A second squad kept the camp in order. They had to air the blankets, pick up paper and other litter, see that the walls of the tents were up in dry weather and down in wet, and keep the guy ropes at proper tension.

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The wood-choppers had to prepare fuel for cooking and camp fires. They cut only dead or dying timber and utilized all they cut, so that no inflammable materials were left on the ground.

There was a sanitary squad, to gather the camp refuse and burn it daily, and to see that the latrine received frequent layers of sand. The leader of this squad was made sanitary inspector. He was to see that everything about the camp was kept in a clean and wholesome condition. Thus there were four squads, with three boys to a squad. Each week the squads were to change, so that every boy would serve on each squad during his four weeks in camp. Finally a long clothesline was stretched between two trees behind the tents, and on certain days each boy had to wash his underclothes and stockings and hang them here to dry.

By eight o'clock the boys were ready to go for the boats. At the Muncy freight station Mr. Hardy produced a pocket hatchet and the crates were quickly stripped away and piled in a vacant corner of a wareshed for use in rekrating the boats.

It was perhaps three hundred yards to the

bank of the river. The boys had little trouble with the light canoes, but the heavier boats were bothersome. Mr. Hardy got some poles and the boats were carried on these, with a boy at each end of a pole. Soon all the craft were afloat.

It was now discovered that neither Willie Brown nor Lem Haskins could swim. They were taken in the boats with the camp leaders. The little flotilla proceeded downstream the better part of a mile, and was close to the rapids by the bridge when Mr. Hardy turned his boat sharply ashore, and in a minute the six craft were drawn up on the shingle.

"We are now at the site of the Warrior's Spring," said the camp leader. "You cannot see this spring because it is now under water. The white men built a dam four miles below here that has raised the level of the river. But in the days when only the Indians roamed this country a very famous spring gushed forth from the sands close to where we are standing. The Indians used to make their way from one part of the country to another along narrow trails, which were often so poorly defined that they could be followed only by means of marks on the trees.

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The trail along the Susquehanna came up the other side of the river and crossed the stream just where the riffles are, for this was the only spot hereabout where the river was shallow enough to be forded easily. The warriors always stopped at this spring on their journeys, and so this spot became the scene of many an Indian encampment. The ground on which you are standing has often been trodden by moccasined feet."

The boys showed their interest by crowding about the speaker.

"I want to call your attention to one thing more," continued Mr. Hardy. "Though the Indians had no book knowledge they were very wonderful engineers. They knew how to find the easiest grades and blaze the best trails. The white men have never been able to surpass them at this. The railroad track over which you came yesterday follows very closely the old Indian trail. Wherever you travel through these Alleghany Mountains you will find that the steel highways are following old Indian trails."

Then pointing to the rapids, Mr. Hardy said: "There is nothing dangerous about this little

piece of fast water. Just keep your bow at right angles to the waves so as to cut through them. Don't let your canoe swing around into the trough of the waves. Grip the sides of your boat tight with your knees and keep your canoe going with plenty of headway. I will go ahead and show you the channel."

The flotilla shoved off. Almost before they knew it one boat after another was caught by the current and swept under the bridge and on through the swirling waters. When they passed the Robinson farmhouse, standing high on the river bluff, Teddy was watching them admiringly and waving his hat and shouting for all he was worth. The boys gave an answering shout, swept on downstream to their little wharf, and drove the bows of their boats up on the shining sands of the cove.

CHAPTER V.

THE HIKE TO FORT BRADY

DINNER over and the dishes washed, the boys set out for Fort Brady. Three miles brought them to the center of Muncy, a pretty little town that got its name from the Monsey Indians, the Wolf tribe of the Six Nations, who once occupied the land. In an open field just north of the town they came to a little mound which Mr. Hardy told them was the site of Fort Brady.

To the north was Muncy Creek, to the west the Susquehanna, while east of them lay Muncy Creek Valley. Southward the land sloped upward to their own ridge. The boys looked the site over carefully, then followed Mr. Hardy along the bank of the creek to a point not far from the Susquehanna and opposite the mouth of Wolf Run, which comes into the creek from the north. And here, sitting in the shade of a

great willow tree, Mr. Hardy told them the story of Captain John Brady.

“On yonder point of land between Wolf Run and the Susquehanna,” began Mr. Hardy, pointing across the creek, “the Indians of this neighborhood had their headquarters. It is a natural stronghold, for it is guarded on three sides by water. In the field behind us Captain Brady had his fort.”

“Maybe he sometimes came scouting right where we are now,” suggested Johnnie Lee, his eyes wide open with interest.

“I have n’t a bit of doubt he did,” replied Mr. Hardy. “This willow must have been standing in his day. There were bushes here then as now, and these made a splendid cover. I have no doubt these bushes used also to be full of Indians —”

“Haw!” screamed a hoarse voice near them, while sounds of a struggle came from the bushes. Everybody was startled and Willie Brown jumped up with his eyes fairly popping out of his head. But it was n’t Indians. It was only a frightened crow beating its way out of the bushes to get away from these undesirable neighbors.

Everybody laughed. But little Willie looked carefully around through the bushes before he sat down again.

When the laughter had ceased, Mr. Hardy went on: "Captain Brady was born just a year after George Washington. Brady's home was in Delaware. There he went to school, and he had even taught school awhile before he moved with his parents to the Cumberland Valley, where, you will remember, the battle of Gettysburg was fought."

He paused, then continued: "In the French and Indian War — by the way, when was that?"

"From 1754 to 1763," answered George Larkin promptly.

"Good," said Mr. Hardy. "In that war both the French and the English made use of the Indians, urging them to the most terrible outrages. So throughout this entire frontier the savages began a series of murderous raids. Troops were raised to defend the frontier and John Brady, though but recently married, went off to face the Indians. He was made a captain in 1763 for bravery.

“After the war the proprietors granted lands to Brady and other officers in recognition of their services. Captain Brady received land on both sides of the Susquehanna a little more than twenty miles downstream. For seven years he lived there.

“But when the Revolution commenced, he left his farm and his family and went off to fight for freedom. He first served with the West Branch Associators, who enlisted for twenty-one months. He became a major. Then Washington sent him home to defend the pioneers.

“But while Brady was still a soldier in the Continental Army, he made several trips between his home and the eastern battle-fields. Once, when Washington needed him badly, he started down the Susquehanna in the dead of winter, when he and his fellows had to fight their way through the ice packs. Once he started in summer, traveling overland most of the way. This time he took along his little son John, a lad of your own years, to bring back the horses. Think of riding one hundred and fifty miles through the wilderness alone. The boys in those days had to be as brave as their fathers.”

"And were the woods full of Indians?" asked Johnnie Lee.

"Indeed they were," answered Mr. Hardy.

"I am glad it is now and not then," said Willie Brown.

"Gee! I wish it was then," cried Roy. "Maybe I'd get a chance to go off with the soldiers."

"You haven't told us yet what Captain Brady did up here," said George Larkin.

"Well," continued the camp leader, "Captain Brady was so badly injured that he had to stop fighting for awhile. By that time the Indians were shooting and scalping people everywhere. Most of the men were away with the army. Those that were left behind were so busy raising food that they could not stop to chase the Indians away. Something had to be done about it. So General Washington ordered Captain Brady to take Captain Hawkins Boone, a cousin of Daniel Boone, and two young lieutenants and come back here to the frontier and raise a company of rangers to protect the settlers. It was then that Captain Brady moved up the river and built his fort in this very field behind us. Most of

the settlers lived downstream. You see, Captain Brady put himself between the Indians and the people Washington sent him to defend.

“But that was just like Captain Brady. He was n’t afraid of anything. One time he saw the Indian squaws paddling across the river and concealing rifles and tomahawks in the bushes opposite Derr’s mill, near his home twenty miles downstream. He could also see a number of warriors across the river by the mill. Captain Brady knew that trouble was brewing. Without a moment’s hesitation he paddled across the river, single-handed, and found that the miller had given the Indians a barrel of whisky. Brady walked straight through the group of warriors and upset the barrel, spilling all of the whisky on the ground. The Indians were very angry. They threatened Captain Brady, but not one of them dared lay a finger on him.

“That same fearlessness led him to move up here. He and Captain Hawkins Boone got their rangers together and scoured this whole frontier. Every time they heard of an Indian outrage or a threatened attack they hurried to the scene, and

it had to be a very slippery Indian that could get away from them."

"Did the rangers have many battles with the Indians?" asked Roy.

"Lots of them," replied Mr. Hardy. "Their hardest fight was when they helped to destroy Tioga. Fifty miles beyond old North Mountain the Indians had their stronghold at a town they called Tioga. A town still stands there. You will find it on the map under the name of Athens. From this stronghold the Indians used to start on their terrible raids.

"So Colonel Hartley was ordered to take a great force of soldiers and destroy it. But all told he could collect only two hundred men. He started from Fort Augusta in September, 1778. The rangers joined him here at Muncy. They were the backbone of the little army. The party departed, probably from this very field, at four o'clock in the morning. Each man carried food for twelve days.

"They followed a hardly distinguishable Indian war trail. It was a terrible journey, for the fall rains beat down upon them unmercifully. They had to sleep on the bare ground, wade

through terrible swamps, and fight their way through dense thickets and difficult mountain passes. Their path led up Lycoming Creek, which comes into the Susquehanna a dozen miles above us. This creek they waded or swam more than twenty times. They were wet all the time, but nothing could stop them.

“ Five days after they left Muncy they met an outpost of Indians. Then they came to a camp of seventy Indians and routed them. They reached Tioga, beat the Indians, and burned the town. Some of the soldiers and many of the Indians were killed. Then they started for home.

“ Tioga was on the other branch of the river. Many of the soldiers were from the fort at Sunbury. So the party came back along the North Branch. Seventy of them were in captured Indian canoes. The rest marched by land.

“ That divided the soldiers and gave the Indians a chance to attack them. Lieutenant Sweeney with a rear guard of thirty men and five scouts was suddenly set upon by savages who came whooping through the forest. The soldiers could not tell how many Indians there were and

they started to flee. The Indians would have killed every one of them had not Captain Brady with his rangers landed from the canoes, and spreading out through the forest, advanced upon the Indians, firing their rifles and shouting terrifically. The Indians ran. The white men had beaten them at their own game. So, by this piece of strategy, Captain Brady and his rangers saved the day. The party got back to Sunbury on the fifth of October, having fought several battles and traveled three hundred miles through the wilderness in fourteen days."

"Some hike!" exclaimed Alec.

"Well I guess," chimed in Lew Heinsling.

"Look the route up on a map," suggested Mr. Hardy, "and see just what a wonderful journey it was."

"Captain Brady himself was killed the following April," continued Mr. Hardy after a pause. "One day he went upstream to get provisions from another fort. He took with him several men and a team. On the return Brady took a short cut, leaving the men to follow the regular path. He had one companion. They reached a dense clump of bushes not so very far from where

you are sitting, when three rifles rang out and Brady fell from his horse dead. His companion ran to get help. When the soldiers arrived, there lay Brady's body untouched. Probably there was no scalp on the entire frontier that the Indians would have prized more than Brady's, but they were so afraid of Brady's rangers that they fled instantly after firing their rifles.

"Brady's watch and money were still in his clothes. Suspended by a cord around his neck, and protected by a little green bag, was Brady's commission from General Washington. This he prized so highly that he always carried it next to his heart. When those early patriots said, 'Give me liberty or give me death,' they meant it. No wonder England could n't whip them."

"You bet she could n't," piped up Johnnie Lee.

"Or anybody else," said Roy boastfully.

"What became of little John?" asked George. "Did he get back from the battle-fields all right?"

"Tell us about John," chorused the boys.

"Little John was as much of a hero as his father," said Mr. Hardy. "He went all the way

to New Jersey with his father and marched with him for a little time. One day Captain Brady told John to start for home. John started, but a soldier told him that next day there was going to be a great battle. So John turned straight around and went back. The next day the battle of the Brandywine took place and little John fought by the side of his father all through the battle. He peppered the British well with his rifle until that was captured, for both he and his father, who were in the hottest part of the battle, were wounded. But he got another rifle. The government, because of his bravery, gave him a new one. That was better than getting a hero medal, was n't it?"

"You bet!" cried the boys. "You could do something with a rifle."

"But though young John had proved that he was a good soldier," went on Mr. Hardy, "he had to go back home. John's father and his eldest brother, Samuel, who was already a lieutenant at twenty, were both fighting with Washington. His brother James, who was a sergeant though but eighteen, was fighting the Indians

under Colonel Hartley. John was the oldest boy left. So he had to go home to run the farm.

“And really it took more bravery to do that than it did to march with the soldiers and fight. For the soldiers usually knew when the enemy was coming, but the settlers could never tell when the savages would swoop down upon them out of the forest. So John went home and tended the cattle and chopped the wood and plowed the fields, and while he guided the plow his brother Hugh, who was only eleven years old, walked beside him carrying his rifle for him. After Captain Brady was killed young John became the head of the family. He took care of his mother and ran the farm and helped to drive away the Indians. He was just as much of a hero as his father had been.”

In a few minutes the boys were headed for camp. Instead of returning through town, they struck off to the river and followed down the bank. In a field near the bridge, overlooking the Warrior's Spring, a farmer had been plowing. They were trudging through the upturned earth when Roy gave a cry and held aloft a black flint arrowhead that he had picked up. It was with-

out a flaw. The other boys examined it with envious eyes.

“Would you boys like to see a whole collection of Indian relics?” asked Mr. Young.

“Yes indeed,” was the answer.

“Then if you’d like to make the trip, I’ll take you to Lewisburg while we are here,” said Mr. Young, “and show you the Bucknell collection. That collection was mostly gathered in this valley.” The boys gave a shout of delight, and so it was settled that they should go.

Camp was reached in time for a dip in the river. Then came supper. Just before the camp fire flickered out that night and the boys started for their tents, Mr. Hardy said: “Boys, I have told you a great deal about the history of this valley, how it was transformed from an ugly black hole to the smiling valley it is now. Where once our forefathers had to find their way through the forests by feeling for marks on the trees, we now have wonderful highways of steel along which we can ride in the greatest comfort at almost a mile a minute. Now a farmer can plow his fields and a traveler can journey from town to town with no danger of being shot or

scalped. You boys to-day have peace and plenty. You owe it all to the brave men and women like Captain Brady and his wife who came into these wild regions and subdued them and overcame the savages at such terrible cost of toil and danger.

“You may think the struggle is all over, that civilization is an accomplished thing. The fight is not over, and it never will be over. To-day we do not have to face Indians and famine, but we have to fight social injustice, disease, and human greed. You don’t know much about these things yet, but you will pretty soon. When you do, I want you to remember that it’s up to you to fight these things just as bravely as Captain Brady and little John fought the enemies of their day. I hope you will never forget the story of Captain Brady.”

“We shan’t,” replied Henry Harper. “I propose that we remember him in the name of our camp. Let’s call it Camp Brady.”

“Hurrah for Camp Brady!” cried the campers, and Camp Brady it became by unanimous consent.

CHAPTER VI

CANOEING AND AN ACCIDENT

NEXT day began the various camp drills, which had been omitted up to this time to give the boys an opportunity to become acquainted with their surroundings. Before breakfast Mr. Hardy put the campers through a setting-up drill. Both Mr. Hardy and Mr. Young were trained athletes and were accustomed to pretty stiff drills of this sort. For ten minutes Mr. Hardy kept the boys at it as hard as they could go, bending and twisting and doubling up in the customary exercises.

"That'll do," he said at the end of the period.

"Pretty stiff, was n't it?" said Robert Martin, who, though perfectly at home in the water, was a bit awkward on land.

"Pooh! That was easy," said Roy, and to prove it he turned three handsprings.

"Did you notice how easily Mr. Hardy did

it?" asked Carl. "I guess he's had lots of practice."

Just then the cook began to beat on a pan and the boys made a rush for the breakfast table. Thereafter the setting-up exercise was a part of the daily routine, the camp leaders taking turns in conducting the drill.

The day was cool and pleasant and the campers hustled through their squad duties as fast as they had gone through the setting-up drill. In a very short time the blankets were aired, the dishes washed and put away, the vegetables prepared for dinner, and the day's supply of wood chopped. In fact more than the day's supply was chopped, because the axe brigade split a little more wood each day than was actually needed. This extra wood, prepared against a rainy day, was heaped up under one corner of the cook's tent.

"Everybody out for canoe practice!" called Mr. Young when things were shipshape about camp. The boys started for the cove pell-mell, racing down the slope as hard as they could. The camp leaders jogged briskly after them and found twelve boys at the wharf still panting for

breath. Charley Russell and Jimmy Donnelly had finished ahead of the others, but so close together that they were still disputing as to which had won. They were the fastest runners in camp and a good-natured rivalry existed between them.

The two boys who could not swim and two others who could swim only a little got into the boats with Mr. Hardy and Mr. Young. The four canoes were manned just as they had been the day before in shooting the rapids, with the best paddlers as steersmen. The flotilla now set out, heading diagonally downstream toward a long indentation in the opposite shore. In this elongated cove the water was not more than three feet deep and there was practically no current. It was an ideal place in which to learn to handle a canoe. In the still water the paddler could see the effect of each stroke, and even if he did upset there was no danger.

Alec Cunningham, Charley Russell, Lew Heinsling, and Robert Martin all could paddle very well. They were put ashore and the other boys were placed in the canoes. For perhaps an hour the camp leaders worked with these boys, showing each how to dip his paddle properly and

feather it on the return swing, how to sweep it straight and deep along the side of the canoe, and how by a twist of the wrist to turn the paddle blade outward at the finish of the stroke and so keep the canoe going straight ahead instead of in circles, as would result if the paddle stroke were not ended with this final twist.

The boys soon grasped the principles involved and were able to send the canoes wherever they wanted to go, though of course they did it awkwardly and with some difficulty. Then the novices were put into the canoes in pairs and taught how to paddle together. At the end of the drill they could navigate their craft fairly well — surprisingly well in view of the fact that they were beginners. But that was because the camp leaders had explained to them very clearly at the outset how to make each stroke and had shown the effect of each stroke.

“I’m going across the river for a time to see a friend of mine,” said Mr. Hardy after awhile. “I’ll leave one of the boats for you and you can practice rowing as well as paddling. I don’t want any of you four who can’t swim well to go in deep water.” Then turning to Alec, Mr.

Hardy said: "As you are the best paddler in camp, I am going to put you in charge of practice while I am gone. Just keep on practicing in this cove." Then the camp leaders rowed across the river.

There was no doubt that Alec was a very skillful paddler. He could handle a canoe almost as well as a grown man. But Alec had a tendency to "show off." So after he had led the paddlers once or twice up and down the cove, he said: "Now I'm going to show you how to handle a boat in rough water."

He headed for the middle of the stream, where the wind, which had recently risen, was kicking up the whitecaps. Jimmy Donnelly was with him. Jimmy was not a good canoeist.

"I don't believe Mr. Hardy will like it if we go out there," said Jimmy.

"Pooh!" said Alec. "It is n't dangerous."

"The waves look pretty big to me," replied Jimmy. "I'd rather not go."

"They're nothing but little ripples," returned Alec. "You can go ashore if you're afraid. I'm going out."

"I'm not afraid," answered Jimmy, "but

I don't think we ought to go. Mr. Hardy would n't like it."

"Did n't he put me in charge?" said Alec.

Before Jimmy could answer, Alec dug his paddle into the water and sent the canoe skimming out toward the middle of the stream. When they got into the waves, they found them a good deal more formidable than they had appeared from near the shore. The light canoe began to toss about. But Alec really was a very skillful paddler and now he was on his mettle. He kept the canoe cutting through the waves in very pretty fashion. It really did seem as though there was no danger.

But when he attempted to turn back to the cove and swung the boat into the trough of the waves, an unusually large roller struck it, and in a second the two boys were struggling in the water. They grasped the sides of the canoe; but swim as hard as they might, they could make little progress toward either bank, for the canoe was full of water. So there was nothing to do but hold fast to the boat as it floated downstream and hope for rescue.

Fortunately the camp leaders concluded their

visit at almost the same time that the boys upset. Mr. Young saw them struggling in the water. The leaders jumped into their boat and rowed swiftly to the overturned canoe. They hauled the distressed lads over the stern of the boat to safety. They took the canoe in tow, gathered in the paddles, and rowed to the cove where the canoe was emptied of water.

"How did this happen?" demanded Mr. Hardy sternly.

Alec hung his head.

"You told me to teach them how to paddle," he said half defiantly, half fearfully, "and I was showing them how to paddle in rough water."

"I told you we'd get into trouble," whispered Jimmy.

Mr. Hardy was greatly provoked, but he knew how to keep his temper.

"I'll think this over," was all he said.

Then the flotilla got under way in its original order, and running straight before the wind, crossed the river in safety and landed at its own cove.

"When each of you can handle a canoe well and swim halfway across the river," announced

Mr. Hardy as they tied the boats fast, "we'll go on a long trip down the Susquehanna."

"Hurrah!" cried the boys, and they made a dash for camp and dinner — all but Willie Brown. He walked along behind the others looking very glum indeed.

"Why, what's the matter, Willie?" asked Mr. Young as he came up with him.

"I can't go on the canoe trip," replied Willie, his eyes beginning to grow moist.

"You can't?" said Mr. Young. "Who said you couldn't?"

"Nobody," replied Willie; "but I can't swim."

"Oh! that's the reason, eh?" laughed Mr. Young. "Well, never mind about that. We're going to teach you to swim."

"But I can't learn," answered Willie. "I've tried."

"Wait and see," returned Mr. Young. And he strode away to join Mr. Hardy.

CHAPTER VII

WILLIE BROWN LEARNS TO SWIM

ON their way to the wharf late that afternoon Mr. Hardy and Mr. Young discussed the case of Willie Brown. Most of the afternoon had been occupied in finding a suitable place to play ball, in staking out a diamond, and in making some sacks for bases. During the preparation of the ball ground the camp leaders had had little opportunity to discuss Willie Brown and his strange lack of belief in himself. Now they talked the matter over at some length.

“ I believe it ’s because he has never had a fair show,” said Mr. Young at length. “ He ’s very small, rather timid, and he has probably always been pushed aside. No one has been willing to show him how to do things. And because he *did n’t* do things well, I suppose his playmates have told him he *could n’t* do them. Anyhow, he has come to believe that he can’t do anything.”

“ I think you are right, Will,” replied Mr.

Hardy. "The lad is a bright little fellow. He's quick enough mentally. I never saw anyone grasp a thing quicker than he did the principle of paddling a canoe this morning. I really believe he made more progress than any of the others, because he knew absolutely nothing to start with."

"Then what we must do," said Mr. Young, "is to show him very carefully how to do a thing, and make him believe that *if he knows how* the rest is easy. We must teach him the great principle of all achievement — that accomplishment is merely knowing how plus practice."

By this time the party had reached the wharf. Just across the stream a great sandy beach sloped gently toward the deep water. It was an ideal place in which to learn to swim. The camp leaders and the four boys to be instructed got into the rowboats.

"The rest of you boys can swim here off the wharf," said Mr. Hardy. "You are all good swimmers, but I don't want you to venture too far out into the stream. The water is very deep. If you should get into difficulty it might not be easy to get ashore."

He started to row away, then turned and added: "Any boy who disobeys will be forbidden to swim hereafter until I think he has learned to mind. Twice already some one of you has disobeyed orders and each time trouble has resulted."

"We promised Mr. Hardy that if he would bring us camping, we'd do just as he told us," spoke up Roy. "It isn't the square thing if we don't do it. I don't care what he tells me to do, I'm going to do it."

"So am I." "And I," echoed the other boys.

"That's the way to talk," said Henry Harper. "The best way we can show our gratitude to Mr. Hardy is by giving him no trouble."

When the boats reached the opposite shore, Mr. Young secured a number of stakes which he drove into the sand along the water's edge at intervals of twenty-five yards. He tied some strips of an old red handkerchief to these stakes. The stakes were intended as guides for the new swimmers, to tell them just how far they had swum.

The two boys who could swim a little were told to wade out into the stream until the water

was just above their waists, and starting at the first stake, swim downstream as far as they could. They were to keep practicing until they could go at least from the first stake to the second.

Then the camp leaders took Willie Brown and Lem Haskins in hand, explained to them simply and thoroughly the principles of swimming, and showed them how to make the first necessary movements. But they did not let them attempt to swim at all that first day. They kept the two boys practicing first the arm stroke and then the leg stroke, until they could do both readily.

Then the leaders showed the other boys how to improve their stroke and how to manage their breathing better. The result was at once apparent. Carl Dexter immediately swam from the first to the third post, while George Larkin got within five yards of the third post. Before that neither of them had been able to swim more than twenty-five yards. They were delighted.

“You see,” said Mr. Young, “it’s just a matter of knowing how plus practice. You know how now. Nothing can keep you from

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becoming expert swimmers but yourselves. Practice will make perfect."

The rest of the period at the beach was devoted to hunting for shells. Mr. Hardy had found two fine white mussel shells that gleamed in the sunlight like great pearls. He would go under water at a depth of three feet and hide these shells under a very thin layer of sand. Then the boys were required to find them. At first they did this very gingerly. Soon they found that going under did not hurt them a particle. They learned to hold their breath and to open their eyes under water. It surprised them very much to find how well they could see. In a very few minutes the four boys were bobbing up and down, getting their breath and plunging under water again, and scratching vigorously in the sand to find the hidden shells. Mr. Hardy kept them at this game until they tired of it. Then they got into the boats and rowed across the river.

The boys did not know it, but Mr. Hardy had been teaching them by this simple method not to fear the water. In a single afternoon they had lost entirely the dread which most beginners

have of getting their heads under water, so that now they were ready to make rapid strides in the art of learning to swim.

Indeed Willie Brown had become so much interested that that night he practiced the strokes on his cot as long as he could keep awake, and the next afternoon, with Mr. Hardy buoying him up a little, he actually swam twenty strokes. His enthusiasm for swimming became unbounded. Here was something that he actually believed he could do, and that belief acted like a tonic on Willie. In a very little while he was able to swim from the first stake to the second, and soon after that to double the distance.

As for Lem Haskins, he liked the water as much as anybody, and now that he understood exactly what he was trying to do, he made rapid progress. Being a large boy, with strong muscles, he was soon able to swim strongly.

Within a week the novices had made such progress that it was no longer necessary to take them across the river to the shallow water. Thereafter they swam with the other boys at the wharf. Swimming in the deep water was the one thing now necessary to give them perfect

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confidence in themselves. Their development was remarkable. The daily swim, which came the last thing in the afternoon, became probably the most enjoyable event in the camp routine.

Teddy Robinson, who was very busy these days helping with the harvest, was allowed to join the swimmers in the afternoon, and often in the evening he would make one in the circle about the camp fire. So he came gradually to know the boys better and better, and the campers liked him very much, especially Lew, whose friendship for Teddy grew stronger every day.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MAN WHO KNEW IT ALL

THE group around the camp fire was always a jolly one. One night Roy Mercer started the fun by challenging Carl Dexter to a hand wrestle. They had a lively battle while all the rest looked on and cheered their favorite.

"You can beat him, Roy," sang out Johnnie Lee. "Stick to it."

"He's easy, Carl," said Lem Haskins.

Roy put up a plucky fight, but Carl was a year older and bigger, and his superior strength finally told. Roy went down in defeat. Then the challenges began to come fast and three or four struggling groups occupied the stage at the same time.

Roy looked on for awhile. Suddenly he shouted to Carl: "I can lick you in a cockfight! Come on!"

Carl accepted the challenge. A great circle was drawn in the firelight and the two boys,

each holding one foot with the hand opposite, began to hop around in the circle and try to butt each other out of it.

The cockfight proved to be a harder battle than the hand wrestle had been. The combatants would back off and then hop together with a mighty crash, but each managed to keep his footing. Then they pursued other tactics. Neither was successful until Roy, pretending to flee, hopped rapidly away from Carl around the edge of the ring. Carl pursued him as fast as he could hop. Suddenly Roy whirled about like a flash and sprang into his pursuer. He caught him amidships and bowled him over, sending him spinning so hard that Carl never stopped rolling until one of his feet was actually in the camp fire. He drew it out quickly and was not hurt. The other boys cheered Roy and took up the game. But after awhile they got tired of cockfights, too, and George Larkin called for a story.

"Tell us a story," cried the boys.

"Very well," said Mr. Hardy. "I am going to tell you the story of the Man Who Knew It All."

He paused a moment while the boys settled themselves with expectant faces.

“Shortly before the French and Indian War,” began Mr. Hardy, “George Washington explored the region that is now Pittsburgh. He pointed out to the government that an English fort ought to be built on the point of land where the Alleghany and the Ohio Rivers come together at what is now the heart of Pittsburgh. So the English started to erect a fort there, but a superior force of Frenchmen came down the Alleghany River, from Canada, drove them away, and turned the fort into a French stronghold which they named Fort Duquesne.

“During the war, soon afterward, the English decided to recapture this fort. General Braddock, who had just come from England to take charge of the British forces in America, decided to command this expedition in person and strike a blow at the French that would never be forgotten. It never has been, but we remember it in a manner very different from the way General Braddock intended that we should.

“General Braddock collected thirteen hundred soldiers, of whom a considerable number

were Colonial troops — men like Daniel Boone, Captain Brady, and General Burrows. But because these men had never learned to march proudly in line with their rifles over their shoulders, and because they wore buckskin hunting suits instead of fine red uniforms, General Braddock despised them. George Washington was one of the officers of these Colonial troops, but General Braddock treated him, too, with great contempt.

“ The march to Fort Duquesne began in June of 1755. The troops started from Cumberland, Maryland. They had a hundred miles to go through this terrible wilderness. The Colonial troops would have followed the Indian trails, but General Braddock declared that this was no way for an army to march, and so he sent ahead a brigade of axemen to clear a road so that the troops might march as they marched on the open plains of Europe. You can see for yourselves how foolish this was. The mountains were full of hostile Indians, who could come sneaking down from every side. Washington pointed this out, but Braddock would not listen to him.

“ The march to Fort Duquesne, which would

have taken native woodsmen only a few days, occupied weeks. The road the axemen cut was only twelve feet wide, and the army was strung out for four miles. It got within eight miles of Fort Duquesne when nine hundred French and Indians fell on it. Nothing could have suited the enemy better than this thin line of soldiers out in the open. The Indians crept up on all sides and began to mow down the troops. This new kind of warfare terrified the English. They could see nothing to shoot at because the enemy were all behind trees. All they could do was to fire useless volleys into the forest. The Indians kept crowding closer and shooting and scalping them by the score. Washington begged Braddock to let him take his Colonials and drive the Indians back. Braddock haughtily refused. For three hours he kept his men standing in line while the Indians murdered them. It was the most awful slaughter that ever occurred in America. Before Braddock ordered a retreat more than eight hundred of his thirteen hundred men had been shot down and sixty-three of his eighty-six officers were totally disabled.

“As it was, the army was saved from total


annihilation only by George Washington, who, the minute Braddock fell mortally wounded, rallied the fleeing soldiers and plunged into the forest with his own Virginia woodsmen, beating off the pursuing Indians. Two horses were shot under Washington and four bullets pierced his clothing.

“So what should have been a glorious victory ended in a terrible disaster. Hundreds of men were killed, hundreds of boys made fatherless, just because one man would not listen to advice. He knew it all.”

There was a murmur of indignation when the story was done. “Boys, what is your opinion of General Braddock?” asked Mr. Hardy.

The campers began to express their indignation by strong denunciations of the unfortunate general. Mr. Hardy let them talk for a minute. Suddenly he said: “Alec, suppose General Braddock had lived. What do you think ought to have been done to him?”

“I think he ought to have been shot,” replied Alec. “He should have listened to George Washington and not thrown away the lives of his men.”



"They don't shoot officers for making blunders of that sort," replied Mr. Hardy.

"Well then, he ought to have been court-martialed," replied Alec, "and driven out of the army."

"That's your opinion, is it?" asked Mr. Hardy, and something in his voice made everyone look at him expectantly.

"Yes, sir," said Alec firmly.

"Well, Alec," continued Mr. Hardy, "suppose General Braddock, instead of leading his men so foolishly into the forest, had endangered them by taking them out in canoes in rough water, particularly after he had been told to stay close to shore. What ought to be done to a person in authority who does a thing like that?"

Alec, who had not foreseen what was coming, hung his head with shame. He did not answer.

"Come, Alec," urged Mr. Hardy, "what ought to be done to him?"

"He ought to be put out of camp," Alec replied. Then he showed what a good boy he really was at heart by adding, "Mr. Hardy, I did n't stop to think when I did that. I see now

what a wrong thing it was to do. But I am not going to do anything more like that — ever.”

“I know you didn’t think,” replied Mr. Hardy, “and that is why we are not going to put you out of camp or any other boy who makes a mistake. But if you had drowned Jimmy it wouldn’t have done any good to say you didn’t think. It’s your business to think.”

“I will hereafter,” said Alec.

“Me too,” echoed everybody else, and they were as good as their words. Not once during the entire month did Mr. Hardy have occasion to complain of either disobedience or thoughtlessness on the part of any of the campers.

CHAPTER IX

A DRILL IN FIRST AID

RAIN was falling gently when the campers opened their eyes next morning, and masses of gray clouds hung so low in the sky that they seemed to be resting on the top of the ridge just above the camp. It bade fair to be a disagreeable day.

After breakfast was eaten and the camp duties were finished, Mr. Hardy had the dining table shifted close under one side of the fly, leaving a large open space for the boys to play in. They were just getting out the games and the books they had brought in anticipation of wet weather, when somebody spied Teddy under a huge umbrella, hurrying up the path. So the games were postponed to await the coming of their young friend.

“The mail-carrier brought this letter for you this morning,” said Teddy, producing from his coat pocket an envelope, which he handed to

Mr. Hardy. The latter slit it open, glanced over the enclosed note, and frowned.

“The supply people that I wrote to in Williamsport for another first-aid kit,” he remarked, turning to Mr. Young, “write me that they will be delayed a few days in filling my order, as they happen to be out of one or two of the things I wanted. I don’t like it a bit.” Then turning to the boys, Mr. Hardy went on: “I’ll tell you what we’ll do. Let’s have a little practice in first aid. That will help us forget the rain.”

The boys greeted the suggestion with approval. They stowed their books and games on the table at one side. Teddy, who had permission to remain, joined them. First Mr. Hardy talked to them about broken bones and explained to them the difference between a simple fracture and a compound fracture. Taking a live stick, he illustrated these differences by cracking the stick and then by breaking it. A multiple fracture, he told them, was one in which a bone was broken in several different places.

“Now,” said he, taking the parts of the stick he had broken, “I am going to place these parts

together exactly as they were before I broke the stick." He fitted the jagged parts together and the stick once more appeared round and smooth. "What I have just done with this stick," he said, "is what a physician does to a bone when he sets it. He simply puts the pieces together just as they were before they were broken."

The speaker cut two thin slices of wood from a board. "If I put one of these slices on each side of this broken limb and then tie the slices in position, I have mended the limb. The little pieces of board will hold the two ends of the limb securely together. That is what a doctor does with a broken bone after he has set it — he puts something strong and flat on each side of the bone and ties these supports firmly in place.

"A doctor has pieces of boards regularly prepared for this work. These are called splints. But when a person is injured and no ready-made splints are at hand, anything that is stiff and of the right shape will answer. You might use an umbrella as a splint for a broken leg, or an axe handle, though if it is possible to do so, it is always best to find a board several inches wide. The splints, however, must not be tied directly

to the leg, but padding must be placed around the injured member so as to fill up the hollows and keep the splints from hurting the injured person."

Mr. Hardy went to his tent and came back with some strips of bandage, a part of a blanket, and some boards. "Now we'll fix up a broken leg," he said. "Who'll be the victim?"

Roy volunteered, and in imitation of a person with a broken leg, fell on the floor and called for help. They stretched him out and Mr. Hardy felt of his leg and explained that the injury was about six inches above the ankle. It was a simple fracture. The boys pretended to set it, separating the broken parts and working the bone into its original position. The leg was carefully padded and two splints cut and quickly bound in place.

"In applying splints," said "Doctor" Hardy, "it is very necessary that they extend beyond the next joint above and the next joint below the injury. Otherwise a movement of these joints will cause a movement at the point of fracture. It is very necessary to avoid movement at the fracture point at all times. So if you have

occasion to treat a broken leg, don't try to pull up the trousers or roll down the stocking, as I have done with Roy's stocking, but take a knife and slit the garment lengthwise so that it can be laid right open."

Now Teddy obligingly broke his arm, and that was fixed up in much the same way with padding and splints and bandages. Then "Doctor" Hardy showed the campers how to knot a handkerchief together and use it as a sling for a broken arm, by suspending it around the neck.

Next "Doctor" Hardy told the boys something about the treatment for bleeding. He showed them where the arteries come to the surface of the body in the throat and the sides of the head, inside of the biceps and at the wrist, in front of the thigh and just below the ankles. He took a bandage and showed the boys how to roll it. Then taking Teddy's arm, he showed them how to use this bandage, unrolling it only as fast as it was applied, wrapping it firmly but not tightly, and being particular that the pressure should be uniform throughout.

Then Mr. Hardy showed them how to tie a bandage around a bleeding member and twist it

up tight with a stick, having first inserted some object like a pebble or a small block of wood immediately over the vein that was bleeding. "A tourniquet," said "Doctor" Hardy, "is seldom necessary except in the case of an injured artery. You can tell when an artery is cut because the blood gushes forth in little spurts every time the heart beats. In such a case the bleeding must be stopped promptly or the injured person may bleed to death. The tourniquet should be applied between the wound and the heart."

He laid down the little stick he had used to twist the bandage. "Now who's going to be bitten by a snake?" asked Mr. Hardy.

For reply Lew Heinsling grabbed his ankle and yelled: "He bit me right there."

"We'll have to work fast in this case," said Mr. Hardy, "to keep the poison from reaching the heart. "First of all fasten a tourniquet a little above the wound. Who'll put it on?"

Teddy jumped forward. All his life he had lived where there were poisonous snakes, and snake bite meant something to him. He tore off a strip of bandage and had it tied around the leg

just above the ankle in no time. Then he twisted it tight with a stick.

“Good!” said Mr. Hardy. “Now you must slash the wound with a knife and suck out the blood.”

Teddy opened his knife and drew the back of the blade quickly twice across the wound. Then he pretended to suck the blood and to spit it out.

“Excellent!” cried Mr. Hardy. “I could n’t do it better myself. But you must remember that it is very risky to suck the blood from a snake bite if you have either bad teeth or sores in your mouth.”

“Doctor” Hardy drew from his pocket a small leather case that contained a hypodermic syringe. “The next step,” he said, “would be to inject permanganate of potash in the wound. Our permanganate was lost with the first-aid kit. This syringe is an old one that I had in my trunk.” Then he showed the boys how to thrust the needle into the flesh about the wound and inject the fluid.

“There is one thing about snake bite that I want to impress on all you boys,” Mr. Hardy went on. “It is customary everywhere to speak

of whisky as a cure for snake bite. Whisky is the worst thing you can take. Never forget that. Snake venom paralyzes the heart. So we want to keep it out of the heart. That's why we first put on a tourniquet and then try to suck the poison out of the wound. Whisky makes the heart beat faster and so draws the poison into the heart quicker than it would otherwise get there.

“There is a use, however, for a stimulant in snake bite, and that is when the poison has reached the heart and the heart is beginning to stop. You can tell that by the beating of the pulse. If the bitten person's pulse begins to fail, then give stimulants. Even then do not use whisky if you can help it. Aromatic spirits of ammonia — half a teaspoonful in a tumbler of water — makes a far better stimulant than whisky. But of course, if nothing else is to be obtained, use whisky.”

“Ouch! This hurts,” said Lew, beginning to tug at the tourniquet. Teddy had been so much in earnest that he had shut off the flow of blood in Lew's leg effectually. Mr. Hardy loosened the bandage.

“When we apply a tourniquet,” he said, “it must be loosened within an hour so the blood can flow a little. Otherwise grave trouble might follow. In case of a serious wound a physician would probably apply three bandages like this at intervals up the leg. Then he could loosen one at a time and the blood would not escape much, while the poison would be admitted to the circulation very slowly.”

Lew removed the bandage and began to rub his leg. “That’s enough for one day,” said Mr. Hardy. “We’ll have another drill soon.”

The boys again got out their games and the time passed so quickly that before anyone could believe it noon came and Al began to sound his dinner gong. But noon it was, and what was better still, the sun was shining.

CHAPTER X

AN ABORIGINAL TRAIL

THAT afternoon the campers played baseball. After they had grown tired of the game Mr. Hardy inquired: "How would you like to take a look at an Indian trail, boys?"

"A real Indian trail?" inquired George Larkin incredulously.

"Yes, sir, a genuine yard-wide, all-wool aboriginal trail, made by the Indians themselves," answered Mr. Hardy with a laugh.

"But how could an Indian trail last for more than a century?" demanded George. "You said they were often so faint that the only way they could be followed was by observing the marks on the trees."

"That is true, George," replied Mr. Hardy, "but not all of them were as faint as this. Indian paths were just like the white men's roads — some of them were much traveled and some

but seldom. The trails between points widely separated were not often traversed excepting by war parties or single messengers. These trails were, therefore, very slight, and these were the trails that the pioneers usually had to follow when pursuing Indians. But some of the trails were worn deep. In these the earth was so pressed down by the constant treading of feet — puddled, the farmers call it — that nothing will grow on this soil. There are two such trails in this neighborhood, and though the Indians vanished more than a century ago, those trails are still distinct. Nothing has ever grown in them.”

“Can we see them?” cried several voices together.

“You can see one of them very easily,” returned Mr. Hardy. “Just gather up your bats and gloves and come along and we’ll take a look at the one on the way to camp.”

The ball ground was only a short distance north of the Robinson barn. Quite close to the barn ran a little stream. Mr. Hardy led the way across the field to this stream and then turned up the gully down which the stream

flowed. During the centuries it had been running this little brook had eaten its way deep into the earth, so that as the little party walked beside the water they were many feet below the level of the fields.

Presently they came to a fence and crawled through the bars. Almost immediately they found themselves in a beautiful wooded ravine. The high, sloping sides were partly covered with trees, but the bottom of the ravine, which shortly expanded into a little meadow, was open and covered with a thick growth of grass.

"We are now on the estate of Judge Brown," Mr. Hardy told the boys. "The house up yonder," he pointed to a beautiful house situated on a projection in the hillside much as their own camp was placed in the clearing, "is Judge Brown's summer home. When he bought this property it was native forest land, little different from the wilderness the Indians knew. Judge Brown has cleared the bottom-lands in front of his house, as you see, and thinned out the forest behind. This little ravine, which used to be a wild tangle, he has developed into its present beautiful appearance. But although these great

changes have been wrought, there are two things here that are exactly as they were when the Indians used to make their way along this little stream centuries ago.

“Do you notice how deeply worn is the path in which you are walking?” The boys stooped and examined it. It was worn down well below the level of the rest of the soil. “This is the old Indian path,” continued Mr. Hardy. “For countless ages the moccasined feet of the aborigines trod this path, for this trail was part of one of the most frequently traveled Indian highways.”

The party had now reached a spot well up the ravine, where the little stream, apparently obstructed by the shape of the land and by native growths, had spread out into a beautiful little pool. Willows grew about it and ferns and great clusters of iris edged the pool. It was a little gem.

“It looks very natural, does n’t it?” asked Mr. Hardy. “Yet it is wholly artificial. The good judge and his wife, who like nothing better than to come here and work among the trees and flowers, fashioned that pool with their own hands

and planted there the ferns and flowers that seem so natural. They are very proud of this little pool, but I think there is nothing on their estate that they prize so highly as they do yonder rock."

Mr. Hardy led the way upstream to where the brook became narrow again and leaped across it, the boys at his heels. He climbed up the steep slope of the ravine to where a great flat rock, gray with moss and lichens, jutted out of the hillside. The campers clustered around it. In the center of the rock was a broad, round depression like a bowl.

"That," said Mr. Hardy, pointing to the depression, "is an old Indian mortar. In this little ravine, sheltered from the winds and warmed by the sun, the Indians would stop for awhile on their journeys, and on this very rock the Indian women ground their corn to meal. To crush the corn they used great stone pestles, like the instruments you have seen druggists use in mixing powders."

"I'll show you some of those pestles when we go down to Bucknell," interrupted Mr. Young.

"When can we go?" asked George Larkin.

"Any time," rejoined Mr. Young. "Tomorrow if you wish. How would you like that?"

"Fine!" shouted the boys, and so it was settled that the trip to Bucknell should be made on the following day.

"How could the Indians grind their corn here if they did n't live here?" asked Lew Heinsling.

"They would halt on the march long enough to grind a small quantity," answered Mr. Hardy, "and then I fancy they often camped here for awhile when they were traveling. You can see for yourselves what a pleasant place this is for a camp. You can almost see the wigwam down beside the brook, the smoke stealing upward from the fires, the warriors lolling about in the shade, and the Indian women here grinding their corn or preparing meals over the camp fires."

The party now proceeded on up the ravine and came presently to the large spring in which the little brook had its source. Beyond that the ridge rose sharply. The campers scrambled up through the pine trees, the needles of which

made the footing so slippery that sometimes they had to go on all fours. Presently they came to a wood road running along the side of the ridge.

"I know what this is," cried Lew Heinsling, who was seldom at fault in the woods. "This is the wood road leading to camp."

"Correct," replied Mr. Hardy.

The boys dashed off in a group toward Camp Brady. Mr. Hardy and Mr. Young followed at leisure along the moss-grown way under the arching trees. When they reached camp, they found the boys eagerly discussing the morrow's trip to Lewisburg.

"I guess I've got them interested in Indians all right," remarked Mr. Hardy.

Mr. Young chuckled. "Just listen a minute," he said. The boys were talking about Bucknell all right, but they were talking mostly about Christy Mathewson and pinchhitter McCormick of the Giants, and Captain Doolan of the Philadelphias. Mr. Hardy looked a little nonplused.

"I told them that those men all learned to play baseball at Bucknell," said Mr. Young. "I

knew that would make them want to see the old college." He was right, for though the boys were much interested in dead Indians, they were a great deal more interested in living heroes of the baseball diamond.

CHAPTER XI

THE FIGHT WITH THE FOREST FIRE

THE trip to Bucknell was destined not to be taken on the following day after all. Very early in the morning Lew Heinsling began to toss about restlessly on his cot, half awake and half asleep. He was sufficiently conscious to know that something was troubling him, without knowing what it was. He stirred restlessly, mechanically pulling his blankets closer about him, as though his discomfort came from cold. He even mumbled to himself in the plaintive fashion of one having an unpleasant dream. How long he lay thus, half awake, half asleep, Lew Heinsling never knew. All he could tell was that for what seemed like a long time something was troubling him.

Then all in an instant he was wide-awake. He sniffed the air. It was heavy with smoke. The tent was full of it. The stifling air was what had so distressed Lew in his sleep. The dawn had

little more than come. The tent walls still looked gray, and as Lew glanced through the open door of his tent he could only faintly discern the outlines of the trees around the camp. The sky was just beginning to light up with the first streaks of day. Lew noted all this at a glance.

“I wonder why Al is up so early,” he muttered to himself. “It’s nowhere near breakfast time. And I wonder why he made such a smoky fire. He’s got plenty of dry wood in his tent.”

Just then a puff of wind blew in. With his woodsman’s instinct for detail Lew noticed that this breeze was from the southwest. The cook’s tent was to the north. He thought of that in a second. Quickly Lew raised himself on his elbow.

“By George! I wonder if the woods —”

He never finished the sentence. During the few minutes he had been fully awake the light had increased rapidly. Now his tent walls stood out white. As he turned on his elbow Lew saw through the south wall of his tent a pattern of red and yellow that danced and flickered about and threw vertical shadows on the white canvas. At the same moment he became conscious that

the dull, roaring sound, which he had supposed was the noise of the rapids at the bridge, was quite different from the monotone of rushing waters. This sound, even now growing louder, was punctuated by tiny explosions and a snapping and crackling.

"Fire!" yelled Lew, leaping from his cot.
"The woods are afire!"

In an instant the camp was in a commotion.

"Dress as fast as you can," shouted Mr. Hardy.

The boys jumped into their clothes faster than they had ever done before. In no time they were dressed and out of their tents.

"The camp tools, Jimmy," called Mr. Hardy.

Jimmy ran to the hardware box. He took out the implements. There were three axes, four hatchets, two spades, and a small mattock — ten implements that could be used in fighting fire. The camp leaders each seized an axe, and running to a near-by pine tree, cut five thick boughs to beat out flames. Meantime the campers selected each an implement. Now the entire fifteen hastened southward through the forest to meet the advancing flames.

As they did so they saw a group of farmers, among whom they recognized Mr. Robinson and Teddy, running southward along the highway by the river, armed with axes, hoes, and spades. The campers were not the only ones who had seen the flames.

Between the camp and the river, it will be remembered, lay one of Mr. Robinson's fields. This field stretched along the river for hundreds of yards. It extended south of the camp fully a third of a mile. All this great acreage was now heavy with grain. The golden wheat was ripe and ready to cut. The straw of the wheat was already drying. The great field was like so much tinder. Should the flames get into it, nothing could stop them. For the wind, which blew from the southwest, would send the flames galloping through the dry grain like fire through a powder train. This field of wheat was the main crop on the Robinson farm.

What made the situation worse was the fact that immediately south of the wheat was a great patch of scrub growth, where the timber had been logged off three or four years previously. Here a dense growth, which was really a thicket

of young oaks, spread over many acres. The scrub leaves were already largely burned dry by the hot sun. The ground was littered a foot deep with branches and boughs scattered here at the time of the lumbering operations. These were now so much tinder. Should the flames get into this scrub-oak patch, they would not merely go racing through it, but the wind would cast ahead of them into the very heart of the wheat field a stream of blazing brands.

Above this patch of scrub the forest continued along the side of the ridge just as it stretched above the wheat field. The southwest wind, now rapidly freshening, came quartering from the river up the hillside, blowing the flames diagonally along the ridge. This tended to keep them away from the scrub and the wheat. But every few seconds a burning branch would snap and a blazing ember come tumbling down the hill, spreading the fire with it. Slowly but surely the flames were eating their way down the ridge toward the danger point below. Even now they were perilously near the edge of the scrub growth.

All these things Mr. Hardy noticed as he ran

at the head of his fire brigade through the forest. He knew that the fire fighters would have to do two things: first, keep the flames from the scrub and the grain; second, stop their advance through the forest. As he neared the front of the fire Mr. Hardy could see through the smoke that the farmers, who had been able to make great speed because they were on an open highway, had beaten his own party in the race, and were now stretching themselves along the edge of the forest and trying to drive the flames back from the scrub growth. So Mr. Hardy determined to line his boys up directly in the path of the fire and stop its advance through the forest.

Fortune was with him here. Not two hundred yards from the line of the flames he came upon a little tract running straight up and down the hill that had been burned over in the spring. This little strip made an irregular black lane hardly more than twenty-five feet wide. If the flames could be stopped anywhere, it was here. The saplings and the younger growths, killed by the fire of the spring, stood dead and dry, ready to spread the flames. But the deadly underbrush, through which a forest fire usually

travels, had all been consumed, and it was as yet too early for the autumn leaves to cover the space with their inflammable carpet.

Mr. Hardy rushed his boys to the south edge of this fire lane. The strongest were given the axes and hatchets to cut away the dead growths. As fast as these were chopped the other boys dragged them well beyond the northern edge of the burned zone.

Al and Mr. Young took pine boughs, and advancing to the very edge of the flames, began to beat them out in an effort to hold them in check while the fire lane was making. It was terrible work. The smoke was stifling. The heat from the flames almost overpowered them. They rushed in and beat at the fire until almost exhausted, then retreated a few paces and recruited their strength. By the time they got back, the places they had beaten out would be flaming again.

“If I had twenty men I’d fix you, dang you!” muttered Al, as he rained blows on the flames.

He had fought many a forest fire. He and Mr. Young battled their way along the line of flames, delaying them here a little and there a little, but nowhere stopping them.

Meantime the axe brigade was accomplishing wonders. Axes and hatchets rose and fell in a hail of blows. The dead saplings crashed to earth unceasingly. Now was evident the wisdom of Mr. Hardy in insisting, as he had done ever since camp was organized, that every tool be kept sharp. One blow of an axe now did the work of two blows of a dull axe. The fire lane began to widen rapidly. For many yards now along this lane the boys had cleared away the trees over a space of five or six feet. At the edge of the forest, next to the wheat field, they had exerted their best efforts. Here the fire lane was already ten feet wide. If only the flames could be held back long enough, Mr. Hardy was sure they would be stopped here.

But flesh and blood cannot work like a machine. The boys, not inured to labor, were beginning to falter under the strain. Mr. Hardy saw this. Quickly he shifted his forces, giving the axes to the smaller boys, while the larger ones dragged away the brush. What they lacked in strength the new axemen made up in freshness. While these were putting all their muscle into

the chopping, the bigger boys were regaining their strength in the easier task.

Taking Henry Harper with him, Mr. Hardy now ran to the relief of Al and Mr. Young. He was none too soon. The heat and the smoke and their own violent exertions had almost exhausted these two fire fighters. They could hardly stand on their feet, yet with the dogged courage of heroes they were sticking to their task. Henry and Mr. Hardy took their places and Al and Mr. Young joined the axe brigade.

"Have the boys spell one another," shouted Mr. Hardy to Mr. Young as the latter disappeared in the smoke.

It was impossible to see more than a few yards, but the glare of the flames was visible along the entire line of the fire. Mr. Hardy looked quickly about him. He saw that the flames, retarded in the center by the efforts of Al and Mr. Young, now stretched across the strip of forest in an irregular crescent. He noted with alarm that the lower horn of this crescent had crept down dangerously close to the edge of the forest. A blazing brand, shot sharply downhill, would land in the wheat field.

“This way!” yelled Mr. Hardy, dashing for the danger point.

Henry followed. Fiercely they attacked the fiery tip of the crescent. They beat out the end of the flames and began to work their way up the hill. This new point of attack held a great advantage. Al and Mr. Young, attacking the center of the line, had been wholly buried in smoke. Here the smoke was mostly on one side.

“Get to windward!” yelled Mr. Hardy.

The two fire fighters attacked the flames from behind. They could beat out the fire here as well as when they stood in front of the flames. The wind blew much of the smoke away from them. Still the air was stifling and the heat sickening. But their position was so much better than Al's and Mr. Young's had been that they kept their strength better. Little by little this flank attack succeeded. Foot by foot they subdued the flames, driving them back toward the heart of the forest. Sometimes a little brand flew ahead and started a blaze in advance of the main line of the fire. They dashed at it and beat out the flames with vigorous blows. One

yard, five yards, ten yards, twenty yards, they killed off the fire.

“If we had our whole force here,” panted Mr. Hardy between blows, “we could stop the fire before it reaches the burned place. Bring them all here with pine boughs.”

Henry darted away in the direction of the fire lane.

“We’re going to stop it,” muttered Mr. Hardy to himself as he picked up Henry’s pine bough, and adding it to his own, again attacked the flames.

He had hardly spoken when he heard a mighty shouting for help from behind him. One glance told him what was the trouble. Through the thick smoke he saw the glare of the flames well down the slope. The fire was almost in the scrub. The farmers had not been able to hold it.

“Henry, Henry!” shouted Mr. Hardy.

“Yes,” came back the answer through the smoke.

“Bring all the boys as fast as you can,” shouted Mr. Hardy. “Come down to the scrub where the farmers are. Hurry!”

Then Mr. Hardy dashed through the woods

to the new point of danger. What he saw when he got there almost made his heart stop beating. At one point the flames had crept down to within a few feet of the scrub. Here a clump of pines furnished such fat food for the flames that the farmers had been utterly unable to beat the fire back. The heat was terrific. The flames scorched everything for yards around. Already the scrub was beginning to smolder. The fire fighters were in bad shape. Their faces were black. Their eyebrows were burned away. Their clothes were smoking. Their hands were burned and blistered. Yet they were fighting desperately.

Mr. Hardy leaped to the very heart of the advancing flames and beat right and left with terrific blows. This reënforcement encouraged the farmers. With superhuman strength they increased their efforts. They stood shoulder to shoulder in the path of the flames, never giving an inch. Their clothes began to burn. They beat out the fires and returned to the attack. Just when it seemed that flesh and blood could endure no longer, the flames lessened. They had burned past the pine. The other wood made

poorer fuel. The farmers saw their advantage. They pressed the flames still closer. Inch by inch they drove them back. Just then Henry was heard hallooing in the forest.

“This way! This way!” shouted Mr. Hardy.

A minute later Henry came dashing through the smoke with the campers. They were not an instant too soon. While the farmers had been facing the forest, a new danger had sprung up behind them. The scorching heat had set fire to a little patch of the scrub. Henry noted it as he advanced.

“The scrub!” he cried.

Mr. Hardy turned. He saw the danger at a glance.

“To the scrub!” he shouted. “We can hold the fire here!”

The campers hurled themselves in a body on the blazing patch of scrub and fairly smothered the new fire under a torrent of blows. Then grabbing up some hoes the farmers had dropped, they dug desperately into the ground, covering the still smoldering embers with earth. In a few minutes the fire in the scrub was entirely extinguished. It was a close call.

Now all the fire fighters advanced together on the flames and were able to subdue them rapidly. They worked up the hill, extinguishing the fire as they went. Presently the blaze had been driven upward to a strip already burned over. There was nothing here for the flames to feed on. Soon they died out entirely.

Meantime the upper end of the fire had advanced along the ridge. The wide fire lane at the lower end of the forest had entirely stopped the flames there. The wind had shifted a little also. Now it was blowing almost straight up the ridge instead of diagonally along its face. So the flames were driven uphill. At the crest was an open, stony field that would stop them. But the danger was by no means over. Blazing embers, flung off to the side, could still spread the flames beyond the fire lane, which, toward the top of the ridge, was very narrow. Here the campers had been able to clear a strip less than four feet wide. But the volume of flame was now so much diminished that the combined fire-fighting forces were more than strong enough to win the fight.

The farmers pressed the battle from the south

side. Al and Mr. Young, who had stuck together through all the fight, attacked the flames from the rear. The stony field was depended upon to stop the advance of the fire at the top of the ridge. Mr. Hardy flung his brigade of campers back on the north edge of the fire, where they resumed their work of clearing away the dead saplings and widening the fire lane. Teddy joined the campers in this work, and he and Lew were soon laboring side by side, the one chopping while the other dragged away the brush and grubbed up the earth between loads. Teddy had just sunk his hoe into the mold when, glancing at Lew, who was wielding his axe a dozen feet uphill, he saw a copperhead wriggle out of the brush before the advancing flames and glide directly toward his companion.

“Look out!” shouted Teddy, leaping toward Lew.

The latter was working with his back toward Teddy. At the cry he stepped back from the tree he was chopping, and his foot landed squarely on the tail of the passing serpent. Teddy struck at the snake, but before his blow could land, the copperhead had turned and

darted a lightning thrust at the offending foot. Teddy's hoe cut the snake in half, but not before the deadly fangs had reached their mark. Lew instantly grasped his leg and gripped it tight just above the ankle.

"Help!" yelled Teddy. "Get Mr. Hardy, quick!"

Without a second's hesitation he snatched out his handkerchief and tied it about Lew's leg, three inches above the ankle. Teddy broke off a piece of a limb, and in an instant had twisted the handkerchief deep into the flesh of the leg.

"Hold it!" he said to Lew.

Lew kept the stick from untwisting. Teddy dug into his pocket and drew forth his knife. He cut away the stocking and twice ripped his blade across the puncture points. Blood gushed out. Kneeling, Teddy applied his lips to the wound and spat out a mouthful of blood. He did this time and again.

Meantime the alarm spread quickly. Mr. Hardy came running up. "Splendid work, Teddy!" he said. "Now for some permanganate —" Then he remembered that the first-aid kit was lost. He stopped dead.

By this time all the campers had collected about Lew, leaving the farmers to finish the fight. Lew began to feel sick. He lay back on the ground. He grew very white. Lem Haskins looked on as though stunned. His disobedience had caused the loss of the first-aid kit. Lew looked as though he were dying. Tears stole from Lem's eyes. His features began to work convulsively.

"Roy," said Mr. Hardy, turning to that individual, "run to the farmhouse and get a tumbler of household ammonia and a tumbler of whisky or hard cider. Go as quick as you can."

"Let me go," begged Lem. "I can run faster than Roy."

"No, Lem," replied Mr. Hardy, "I know how you feel, but we can't afford to make any mistakes. Roy will do exactly what I tell him and do it right."

Lem stepped back and buried his face in his hands. "If he dies," he moaned, "it is my fault."

And it looked for a time as though Lew might die. He felt weaker and sicker every minute. Mr. Hardy encouraged him.

"It was not a large snake," he said, looking

at the dead reptile, "and I don't believe you were badly bitten."

But Mr. Hardy's face belied his words. He sat down beside Lew and felt his pulse. Then he looked anxiously through the forest in the direction Roy had taken.

To the farmhouse and back it was more than a mile. The return trip was uphill. Mr. Hardy knew it would probably be a quarter of an hour before Roy could get back. He applied two more tourniquets farther up the leg and waited.

Ten minutes had hardly passed before a shout was heard. It was Roy. Instead of climbing the hill at the camp and returning through the forest as he had gone, Roy was speeding along the river road, where he could make better time.

"There's a boy who uses his head," commented Mr. Hardy when he saw what Roy was doing.

Then turning to Charley Russell and Jimmy Donnelly, Mr. Hardy said: "Cut down through the wheat field and get the stuff."

The boys tore down the slope. The heavy grain entangled their feet somewhat, but they trod down a path that made their return easy.

Each took a bottle from Roy and dashed up the hill. Roy panted after them, stumbling and falling. When he reached the campers, he dropped to the ground in utter collapse. The hard run after the strain of the fight with the fire was more than he could stand. The boys looked alarmed.

"He's all right," said Mr. Hardy. "He's merely fagged out."

Meantime he was burning out the wound on Lew's leg with the strong ammonia from one of the bottles. After a considerable period he loosened the tourniquet Teddy had made. At intervals he loosened the others slightly and then took Lew's wrist again. The boys stood by with white faces. Lem Haskins was breathless. Lew felt sicker than before. Mr. Hardy gave him a little drink from the other bottle. Then he sat with his hand on Lew's pulse.

"Well, boys," he said after a time, "I guess you need n't worry any longer. Lew will pull through all right. Teddy's prompt action has saved his life. And I think Lew will hardly even be sick. Just now he feels bad. That will pass away in a few hours."

Then turning to Roy, Mr. Hardy stuck the open ammonia bottle under his nose.

"It's time you got up," he said.

Roy got up with comical suddenness. The group of white-faced boys burst into a laugh.

"Gee!" said Roy with a sneeze and a snort, "if that's the stuff you gave Lew, I don't wonder he's all right. That would raise a dead man."

By this time the fire was practically out. The farmers were left to end it and the boys trooped back to camp. Mr. Hardy and Mr. Young made a chair with their arms and carried Lew. They put him to bed at once. In a day or two he was as good as ever. From this time forward Lew and Teddy were like brothers.

Now that the campers had time to take a look at one another they realized what a hard-looking crew they were. They were smoky and grimy. Their clothes were torn and burned. Their eyelids were singed. Many of them had painful burns on their hands. They were just getting cleaned up, and Al was getting his fires under way to cook the long delayed and now much

needed breakfast, when a messenger was seen approaching from the farmhouse. Mrs. Robinson wanted the boys to eat breakfast with her. Al stayed with Lew while the boys went to the Robinson home.

The campers were stowing away Mrs. Robinson's delicious hot cakes and drinking the delicious milk when in came Mr. Robinson. He stopped in surprise when he saw what a huge family he had.

"Boys," he said, his voice tremulous with emotion, "I don't know how I am ever going to thank you for what you have done for me this day. But you are welcome to anything you want on this farm. The camp ground is yours as long as you want to come here."

He paused a moment, then went on: "I knew when Mr. Hardy asked if he might bring you, that if you were anything like him, you'd be a fine lot of boys. You don't know what a fine man Mr. Hardy is —"

"Yes we do," interrupted Roy.

"No you don't," retorted Teddy. "Mr. Hardy saved me from —"

"Children should be seen and not heard," said

Mr. Hardy with a smile as he gently clapped his hand over Teddy's mouth.

Teddy subsided, but mentally reserved the privilege of telling what he knew when he got a better chance.

CHAPTER XII

LEM TURNS OVER A NEW LEAF

THE next few days were very quiet ones at Camp Brady. The campers came back from Mrs. Robinson's hospitable breakfast table no longer hungry, but extremely sore and tired. And for a time both the soreness and the weariness increased. Al, the cook, appeared to mind the terrible labors of the morning no more than as though he had been engaged in some pleasant pastime. He went right on with his work as though nothing had happened, and his great voice could be heard booming out over the valley as he repeated aloud a bit of musical doggerel he had learned in the lumber camps:

“We’ve lumbered here, we’ve lumbered there,
By George! We’ve lumbered everywhere.”

In fact it was Al's training in the lumber camps that left him now the least affected member of the party. For years and years he had

swung a heavy axe the winter through. His great muscles, hard as whipcord and accustomed to toiling for hours at a time, had felt no slightest fatigue from his morning's efforts. It was the smoke and the heat that had weakened him. Once away from these, his hardy frame revived under the fresh air, like a drooping lily in cold water. So now he was the freshest and most cheerful person about the camp.

But it was far different with the others. The camp leaders, strong though they were, had not had the inuring years of labor that made Al's muscles immune to fatigue. They were thoroughly tired. Moreover, each of them had sustained painful burns on the hands in their close battle with the flames.

As for the boys, they were completely worn out. Every one of them had worked to the limit of his physical capacity. Already their muscles were beginning to feel stiff and sore. The heat and the smoke had affected their young bodies much more than they had affected the older members of the party. There was not a boy among them whose hands were not extremely sore. Their palms were full of great blisters

from the axes, and their hands and wrists were torn and scratched from their struggles with the brush. Henry, who had been in closer contact with the flames than any of the other boys, had sustained several burns. Altogether the campers were physically a wretched crew. Mr. Hardy got some oil and salve and bandages and eased the smarts as well as he could.

But if the campers were physically wretched, their mental condition was far different. They had not yet recovered from the thrill and excitement of their fierce battle. They had had an adventure, not a make-believe adventure, but as Mr. Hardy might have expressed it, "a genuine, yard-wide, all-wool adventure." They had fought a forest fire. They had defended their camp from flames. And what was best of all, they had repaid their benefactors by saving the wheat from destruction. It is not often that a boy has an opportunity to take part in an adventure so desperate as the fight with the forest fire had been. Now they lay on the turf in the grateful shade of a tree and talked it over excitedly. Vividly they recalled the fierce combat.

"Gee!" said Johnnie Lee. "I'll bet the flames were a hundred feet high!"

"I'll bet it was hotter than Nebuchadnezzar's furnace," cried Willie Brown, who had recently been much impressed by a Sunday-school lesson concerning the fiery trial of Daniel's three friends.

Henry Harper, who had faced the flames at closer range than the others, closed his eyes with a shudder. "What a terrible thing fire is!" he muttered.

"Gee whiz! You ought to have seen Teddy hit that snake!" said Robert Martin, who was the only one of the fire fighters that had actually witnessed the tragedy.

"How did he do it?" asked the boys with eagerness.

Robert told in detail how Teddy had jumped to the aid of his friend when the serpent came wriggling out of the brush, and how he had almost succeeded in killing the copperhead before it could strike. "I never saw anyone so quick," said Robert. "Teddy jumped ten feet and hit the snake before you could wink an eye. And the way he went after Lew's leg was even

quicker. He had his necktie around it before I knew Lew was bitten."

"I wonder how Lew's feeling," said Jimmy Donnelly, who was always thoughtful of others. "Let's go see."

Thereupon the entire group got up and tramped over to Lew's tent, all excepting Lem Haskins. Lem watched the other boys go trooping away, stood irresolute for a moment, and then headed straight for Mr. Hardy's tent. He found the camp leader alone.

Lem entered the tent with downcast countenance. The hour of agony he had experienced as he stood helplessly watching Lew as the latter lay white and still in the forest had affected him powerfully. The anguish of that hour had been like the fire that burns away the dross in the refining of precious metals. The Lem who now entered Mr. Hardy's tent was very different from the Lem who had lost the first-aid kit. He hung his head now, not from sullenness, but from repentance.

"Mr. Hardy," he faltered, "you don't think Lew will die, do you?"

"No," replied Mr. Hardy, "but he had a

very narrow escape. If Teddy had n't been so prompt, Lew might be dead already."

Lem was silent for a time. "Mr. Hardy," he said, "it was all my fault. Is n't there something I can do to make up for it?"

"I am very glad to hear you talk this way, Lem," returned Mr. Hardy. "It shows you have the right spirit after all. I think there are a good many things you can do to make it right. In the first place there are things you can do for Lew himself —"

"Yes, yes," interrupted Lem. "Let me do his camp duties."

Lew was then a member of the squad that chopped the camp wood, and Lem was now proposing to take Lew's share of that duty upon his own hands — literally upon his hands, too; and those hands were as sore and badly blistered as anybody's, for Lem had done his full duty at the forest fire. Nothing could be more significant of the change in him than his desire to do this work, which must inevitably be hard and painful.

"Then there are other things you can do," went on Mr. Hardy, "which do not directly concern Lew, but which will show whether or not

you really mean it when you say you want to act differently.”

“Tell me what they are and I will do them,” said Lem.

“I am thinking about your duty to people in general,” said Mr. Hardy. “You have seen how your carelessness in losing the medicine kit has affected the whole company of us. You are not old enough yet to realize it, but the same thing is true of almost everything you do — in some way it affects other people. The effect of your own actions on yourself is not so important. If you had been bitten by the snake and had died in consequence, you would simply have suffered from your own act. Some people would have said you deserved it. But when someone else suffers because of what you do, you see how very wrong that is.”

“I never realized before,” replied Lem in a low voice, “that my actions affected anybody else.”

“They do,” continued Mr. Hardy. “Every act affects somebody else. I told you about the old pioneers who settled this valley. If they had n’t come here and fought the Indians and

overcome the wilderness and faced starvation and hardships, you could not be here camping to-day, because this region would not be habitable. You are enjoying yourself now because of the deeds of brave men and women who died many years before you were born. Never forget that, Lem. Remember that the things you do will affect those who are to come after you. You do not know how they will affect them and I cannot tell you. But if you are mean and careless and unkind, your acts are going to hurt somebody. If you are brave and cheerful and kind, what you do will help somebody. Even a pleasant smile helps along. And there is nothing in the world that does so much good to other people as to see a man who is doing his work — his plain, everyday duty, like our squad work, for instance — in a brave, cheerful, happy way. Don't forget it, Lem."

Mr. Hardy held out his hand and Lem grasped it eagerly and squeezed it firmly. "I never shall," he replied. "Before we leave this camp I am going to be like you said Roy Mercer was — 'a boy who will do just what he is told to do and do it right.'"

And Lem was as good as his word. From that hour he was a changed boy. No one, watching him vigorously wielding an axe in Lew's place, would have dreamed that his hands were paining him. No one, seeing the bright-faced lad who ministered so faithfully to Lew, and who cheerfully went about the camp looking for opportunities to be of service, would have recognized in him the shiftless, lazy, sullen Lem Haskins of old. He was indeed a changed boy.

In fact Lem was quite the most active person about camp, for the rest of the boys took it as easy as circumstances permitted. Their sore hands and arms and shoulders made baseball quite out of the question. The practice in paddling was temporarily suspended for the same reason. The boys took their daily dip in the river, however; but Mr. Hardy made them do this for hygienic reasons. A few of them swam about, but mostly they contented themselves with disporting in the shallow water of the cove.

Willie Brown was a shining exception. Nothing about the camp was so wonderful as Willie's enthusiasm for swimming and his determination to succeed. Now that he had gotten

the belief that he could swim if he would, Willie worked like a Trojan. The other boys occupied their time in diving and splashing about and playing games. But Willie continued as he had begun, a striver after perfection. While the others were noisily playing, Willie could be seen swimming steadily up and down the shore, resting for awhile and then returning and practicing assiduously each new stroke and movement shown him, until he could do it perfectly. Unknown to the campers, and almost unknown to himself, Willie was preparing a great surprise for them.

During these days Mr. Hardy continued his lessons in first aid. Also he and Mr. Young taught the boys how to rescue a drowning person. They showed how to approach and how to break death grips. Mr. Young was the drowning man and Mr. Hardy rescued him.

Mr. Young clutched both of Mr. Hardy's wrists. To break this death grip Mr. Hardy raised his arms high in the air, forcing both their bodies low into the water. Then he suddenly turned his arms down against Mr. Young's thumbs and broke the hold easily.

Next Mr. Young got a grip around Mr. Hardy's neck. Mr. Hardy thrust his right hand into Mr. Young's face, deftly covering Mr. Young's mouth and gripping his nostrils with the one hand. Then taking a deep breath, he shot his knees into Mr. Young's stomach, but carefully held fast to his nose and mouth. Both men went under water during this struggle, but the grip was broken. They came up, choking and laughing.

Then Mr. Young threw his arms around Mr. Hardy's neck from behind. A man so grasped by a drowning person would shortly be strangled. Hence this grip must be broken immediately. Mr. Hardy grasped the encircling arms by the wrists and pulled them as far away from his neck as he could. Then turning his head to one side, he was able to slip down through the encircling arms. It was a tight squeeze, but he got through and disappeared for an instant.

"Another way to break this grip, boys," he said when he came up, "is to hold the arms away from your neck and jerk your head back as hard as you can, banging the nose of the person grabbing you. That will always release the grip.

I did n't do it to Mr. Young because I did n't want to spoil his looks."

Now the boys were shown how to tow a person safely by swimming on the back and drawing the rescued one along by the chin or shoulders, and also by thrusting the left arm under the drowning man's left arm and around his chest and clutching his right arm, while swimming with one's own right arm free.

Finally the camp leaders showed the boys how to resuscitate one who had been in the water, by laying him on his belly on a rolled-up coat or stone and pressing on the small of his back to expel the water from his stomach.

"Before you do this," explained Mr. Hardy, "it is necessary to have the rescued man's mouth open, and if possible the tongue out, so that the water may run out freely. The mouth can be pried open and held with a stick or cork pressed between the teeth. The tongue can be pulled forward easily when gripped with a handkerchief."

Mr. Young was, of course, still acting the part of the drowning man. Mr. Hardy pulled his tongue forward gently. Then he flopped him

over on his back after he had gone through the motion of expelling the water from his stomach, and now began working his arms up and down at regular intervals, raising them straight from the body over the head and then down again and squeezing in the abdomen. This was to start the lungs.

The boys readily grasped the principles involved, and every day thereafter the swimming hole was the scene of many rescues.

“You see, boys,” said Mr. Young, “it is the man who knows how to do a thing who is able to do it when the critical moment comes. You have had a very striking illustration of that in the case of Teddy and Lew. Teddy saved Lew’s life just as easy as could be. But if he had n’t known how, he would have had to stand helplessly by and watch his friend die. Don’t forget that. The great thing in this life is to be prepared. You know that is the motto of the Boy Scouts. The man who is prepared is the man who is equal to the emergency.”

During the next few days, before the boys regained their normal activity, Mr. Young took them on some pleasant strolls along the wood

road and on the highway by the river. He pointed out to them many interesting things about the trees and the flowers and the birds and the smaller animals, which were numerous about camp.

CHAPTER XIII

AL JORDAN SPEARS A CARP

THE campers had left the water after the swimming hour one afternoon and started toward the camp, when Lew Heinsling turned around to wave his hand to Teddy, who had joined them in the swim and who was now trudging up the road toward home. As Lew faced about he noticed a great ripple on the river where a big fish had evidently broken the surface. Some of the campers had already fished a little, but with indifferent success. This disturbance in the water indicated a much larger fish than any the campers had yet seen, and Lew stood looking at it eagerly and regretfully. He was fond of fishing. As he looked there was a second swirl in the water a short distance upstream. More swirls broke the water, one behind the other, until it appeared as though a company of big fish were coming downstream in Indian file.

"Look at the river," Lew called to Teddy.

Of course everybody else looked too. More and more swirls appeared, but all the time farther downstream. Something was evidently coming down with the current.

"I know what they are," called Teddy. "They are a lot of big carp. You can't catch them, though. They won't bite."

The boys went on up to camp. Everybody was talking fish. The cook's assistants gathered in the cooking tent and began to pare potatoes.

"Did you see that big one jump?" asked Roy. "Wasn't he a whopper?"

"I'll bet he was three feet long," said Willie Brown, his eyes bulging.

"There must have been forty of them," declared Lem Haskins.

"Did you ever see a carp?" Roy asked Lem. "I don't believe there are any around Central City."

Not one of the three had ever seen a carp and they appealed to the cook.

"Al, what's a carp like?" Roy asked.

"It's a great big fish with sort of reddish-yellow scales," replied Al, "and a funny little

mouth like a sucker's. Some people say they hain't good to eat, but that 's 'cause they don't know what they 're talkin' about. If you know how to cook 'em, they 're mighty good eatin'."

"Teddy said you could n't catch them," declared Roy. "He says they won't bite."

"You can ketch 'em all right," replied Al, "but not with a hook and line. You have to gig them fish."

"What 's that?" asked Willie.

"Never see a fish gigged?" asked Al in surprise. "Well, now, I reckon I 'll have to show you."

The boys continued their questions, but Al would tell them nothing more.

The minute supper was over and his work was done he went stumping down the hillside and turned south along the river road. He was heading for the cabin of the fisherman that Mr. Hardy had visited the day Alec and Jimmy upset the canoe. After a time he came stumping back, bearing in one hand what looked like an iron basket. In the other he carried a short, stout mast with a still shorter yard. He had also a five-pronged spear or "gig" on a long,

slender pole. He laid them down in one of the boats, then stumped up to camp, and began to cut some pitchy knots from a fat pine. When he had a box filled with the pine, he shouldered it and went down to the boat. All the camp trailed after him.

Al now set up the mast in one of the boats, stepping it firmly in some cleats he had nailed to the bottom for that purpose, and holding it upright with wire guys running from the top of the mast to the sides of the boat. He set the arm in position, pointing it straight out over the prow of the boat. Then he hooked the iron basket on the yardarm and filled it with pine-knots. From his pocket he took a file and began to sharpen the points of the spear.

"When it gets dark," he said, "I'm goin' out and ketch one of them carp."

"Can I go along?" cried a dozen voices.

"Lord bless you!" exclaimed Al. "How'd we ever get twelve boys in a rowboat — and if we had 'em there how'd we ever get any fish?"

The boys looked disappointed.

"Tell you what, boys," Al went on, noticing the looks of disappointment. "You come along

the road and I'll stick close to the shore, and if we git any fish you can see how it's done."

A shout of satisfaction went up.

"Could just one boy go if he'd be quiet?" asked Lem.

"Well, now, I don't know," replied Al warily. "That depends."

"If you can take one boy, Al," pleaded Lem, "won't you please take Lew. He's missed half the fun the last few days."

This generous idea appealed to the other boys.

"Yes, take Lew!" they chorused.

So it was arranged that Lew was to be taken. Mr. Hardy was to go along to row the boat. Mr. Young was to accompany the boys on the bank to watch the fun.

Night soon came. When Al thought it sufficiently dark, he gave the signal and the party started. Each boy had gotten his palouser and an extra candle.

Al got into the boat and applied a match to the fuel in the iron basket. He stood in the bow. Mr. Hardy took the oars, facing forward so he could see where to row. Lew sat on a seat between them.

"All right!" sang out Al, and Mr. Hardy shoved the boat out into the stream. The big lumberman picked up his spear and held the boat motionless with it for a moment while he glanced about. As he looked up toward the group on the high bank he presented a very striking appearance. The fire, now flaming fiercely, lighted up his rugged visage unevenly, making it seem even fiercer than usual. His huge form was magnified by the wavering light until he seemed a veritable giant. His infirmity was concealed. He stood upright in the prow of his craft looking for all the world like a fierce old pirate.

"He makes me think of one of those old vikings we read about," said George Larkin. "Gee! I would n't want him to be coming after me with that spear."

Everybody agreed. And they all gave a start a second later when Al suddenly shot his terrible voice at them.

"Just keep right along the road, boys," he said. "It runs close to the edge of the bank. You can show your lights as much as you like, but don't make a noise."

Then he shoved off with his spear and the search was on.

The boat moved gently downstream, Mr. Hardy dipping his oars slowly and softly. The flaring light, held head high by the mast and arm, illumined the river in a wide circle. Through the pellucid waters the onlookers could see the bottom of the stream with startling distinctness. The stones, the rocky ledges, the old stumps and logs, the hollows and elevations, all stood revealed as clearly as though seen through the air only. It was a surprisingly interesting sight. Mussel shells gleamed white in the sand. The water growths could be seen swaying gently in the current.

But the most interesting sight of all was the view of the river life. It was like looking through the transparent sides of an aquarium. Numerous small fishes came darting toward the light. Eels in great number could be seen lying on the river bottom or wriggling slowly along. As the boat approached, most of them would dart away, vanishing from sight in clouds of mud kicked up by their own tails. The boys were fascinated by the sight. And when an

enormous eel several feet long was seen gliding near the river bottom, the boys could keep quiet no longer.

Al raised his eyes from the water and waved his hand warningly.

Big fish now began to appear. Some swam near the boat. There were bass and pike and big mullets. Al paid no attention to them. None of them would have weighed more than six pounds. Al was after a big one, and a carp at that. So he let the others go by. Occasionally a carp swam within reach, but none that was big enough to suit Al. A number of silver carp, very beautiful fish, that Al could easily have speared, swam directly under the boat. But the giant spearman passed them all, never moving from the striking pose he had taken at the start, with his spear point resting in the water, his right arm elevated, his body bent slightly forward, ready for a lightning thrust.

The party had proceeded perhaps a mile when suddenly Al shifted his position a little and swung the point of his spear forward.

“Ease her up,” he said softly.

Mr. Hardy slowed the boat.

"Head her out," said Al.

Mr. Hardy turned the prow toward the deep water.

Then appeared the cause of these orders, a gigantic fish that the keen vision of Al had glimpsed far ahead in the water. It was enormous. Its tail was barely moving, sending the fish slowly forward toward the flaming light, which it was doubtless viewing with curiosity.

"Swing her out a bit more," said Al.

The boat turned gently.

"Hold her."

The boat stopped dead. The fish came cautiously on.

Meantime the boys on the shore had slipped to the very edge of the high bank. Here, like balcony spectators at a theater, they looked down on the boat.

"Keep down," whispered Mr. Young. "Fish can see well. You may scare him away."

The boys dropped to their knees, their faces peering out through the tall grasses. They themselves were in the deep shadow thrown by the bank. Their lights were behind them.

On came the fish, slower and slower. A dozen

feet away it stopped, motionless. There the carp remained for a full minute, its fins gently waving. It was a monster. Curiosity had brought it thus close, but the experience of many years now kept the giant fish from approaching any closer. The situation was critical. The fish was motionless, the boat was motionless. The slightest movement in the boat might send the fish darting away.

“Keep quiet,” whispered Al. He himself stood like a graven image. He knew that sooner or later curiosity would overcome caution in that fish. He was right. After what seemed an age the carp’s tail moved. The fish came toward the boat, slowly, almost imperceptibly at first. Not a soul stirred. When the fish was within six feet of the boat, it turned slightly, presenting its broad side to the spearman. But the fish was still too far away and its new course would soon take it out of reach. It was now or never.

“Swing her in,” growled Al.

Gently the nose of the boat turned toward shore. At the same instant Al slid his right hand high up the shaft of his spear and cau-

tiously slipped the prongs through the water toward the big fish.

"A little more," whispered Al.

The boat swung closer to the carp. Now the fish was only three feet away. Al gathered himself for the thrust. The fish seemed to divine what was coming. There was a swirl in the water and the carp darted directly under the boat. The boys on shore groaned. They could not see into the shadow beneath the boat. Swift as was the rush of the fish, Al had been even swifter. The carp and the darting spear had met directly below the side of the boat and the spear was now buried deep in the back of the great fish.

In the darkness, under the boat, the fish was fighting for its life. To keep it from tearing loose from the prongs of the spear, Al was now bearing down hard on the gig, pressing the carp tight against the river bottom. It was no easy job to hold it there. The huge fish squirmed and wriggled and tossed about so violently that Al almost upset the boat in his struggles. Suddenly the carp gave a tremendous flop, raised itself clear of the bottom, and darted for the deep water. The spear was dragged almost out

of Al's hands. He leaned far over the side of the boat to keep the shaft from breaking.

"Swing her out! Swing her out!" he cried.

But before Mr. Hardy could dip his oars, the yardarm with the heavy torch swung toward the lower side of the boat, and this added weight nearly overturned the craft. She dipped water. Mr. Hardy sprang to the other side to right her. The loosened arm flopped with the motion of the boat. One of the wire stays broke. The basket of flaming pine-knots fell sizzling into the river. The fishermen were left in absolute darkness.

"The palousers!" cried Mr. Young.

The boys on the bank jumped back to the roadway where their little camp lanterns were still burning. In an instant twelve palousers were sending their searchlight beams to the aid of the fishermen. The boys on the bank saw that the boat was partly filled with water, but Al still had the carp fast against the bottom.

"See if you can scoop him," said Al to Mr. Hardy. The latter took a great scoop net from the bottom of the boat, and leaning far over the side, began to work the lower rim of the net

under the captured fish. The palousers threw a bright beam under the boat, aiding Mr. Hardy greatly. He worked the net inch by inch under the great fish until its head and half its body were within the circle of the meshes.

"Lift up a little," said Mr. Hardy.

Al raised the fish, that now was struggling but feebly, clear of the bottom.

"See if you can shove him any farther into the net," said Mr. Hardy.

The spear itself prevented the complete enmeshment of the fish. But Al succeeded in jamming all but a few inches of the tail into the net. Then very carefully they raised the big fish to the surface, the spearmen all the while pressing it down into the net. They had to be careful lest they upset the boat.

"Get hold of his gills, Lew," said Mr. Hardy.

Lew thrust an arm into the net and grasped the fish firmly, as directed.

"I've got him," he said.

Al drew the gig out of the fish's back.

"Up with him," said Mr. Hardy, lifting the net.

Lew hoisted also, and in another minute the

monstrous fish lay helpless in the bottom of the boat.

The craft was now headed upstream and tied up at the cove. The party proceeded to camp, with Al in the lead, triumphantly carrying the catch in one hand. At the camp it was found that the fish was thirty-nine inches long and that it weighed twenty-seven pounds. It was a great night for Camp Brady.

CHAPTER XIV

THE STARS AS A GUIDE IN THE FOREST

BY this time the evening was well advanced.

But though the usual hour for sleep had come, the boys were still too much excited over the stirring struggle they had witnessed to feel at all sleepy. Someone proposed a camp fire.

“Very well,” said Mr. Hardy, “but build a small one.”

Lew Heinsling got a handful of wood and soon had a small blaze going, such as a woodsman would use for cooking. The boys gathered close about this diminutive camp fire, which was hardly warm enough to keep off the evening chill. They formed a striking little group, ringed so close about the flames, with nothing visible behind them save the indistinct white blur of the tents. An onlooker would have been reminded of an Indian council, with the braves sitting close about the council fire.

“If you should suddenly be overtaken by

darkness while tramping in these mountains," said Mr. Hardy, after the boys had settled themselves comfortably, "how would you find your way out?"

"By remembering how the land looks," said Willie Brown.

"I'm afraid that would n't help," replied Mr. Hardy, "because no matter how well you remembered the appearance of things, you could n't see them in the dark."

"I'd follow a brook down till it led me to the river," said Alec Cunningham.

"There might not be any brook to follow," returned Mr. Hardy, "and when you did get to the river you might not know where you were. Then you would n't know whether to go upstream or downstream."

"I know how you'd get out," said Lew Heinsling. "You'd do just what General Burrows did—find your way out by the stars."

"Good," replied Mr. Hardy. "That's exactly what you'd have to do. But before you could get out that way, you'd have to be familiar with the heavens. Did any of you ever see a star map?"

“A star map!” cried Roy. “Are there maps of the stars?”

“Yes, Roy,” said Mr. Hardy. “The heavens above us are mapped out just like the earth. In the maps of the earth there are mountains and rivers and lakes and oceans, but in the maps of the heavens there are planets and stars and moons and suns. If you will look up at the sky, you will see that the stars form little triangles and squares and other figures. These groups are called constellations. All these things are indicated on a star map. If you had one of these maps and could see the stars, you would know which way to travel. Suppose you were lost in these mountains and you knew that you ought to go west. By traveling steadily toward a given star, you would be moving west. That is just what General Burrows did. He was traveling northward when he got lost. I have no doubt he found his way out by following the north star.”

By this time all the campers were on their feet, looking upward at the heavens. The light of the fire interfered with their vision.

“Put it out,” ordered the camp leader.

The boys kicked the little fire to pieces and soon stamped out the last glowing ember. While they were doing this, Mr. Hardy went to his tent and returned with a lighted palouser and a curious little thing he called a planisphere. It consisted of a disc of black paper a foot wide mounted on a pasteboard frame that revolved within a second frame so shaped that only an oval portion of the black disc showed at one time. This black surface was thickly studded with gilt dots and stars and zigzag lines. Mr. Hardy told the boys that this exposed oval represented just that portion of the entire sky that was visible at any one time. By setting the disc according to some figures on the edge of the frame, one could see on the planisphere exactly how the heavens would appear on any given hour of any given night. Mr. Hardy set the planisphere to show the stars as they were at that moment. Then he held the planisphere in front of his palouser and the boys saw that the black disc was translucent. Against the light of the palouser they could see every dot and mark of the star map.

“Face south and hold it over your head,”

said Mr. Hardy, handing the planisphere to Lew Heinsling.

Lew did so, and Mr. Hardy turned the light of his palouser on the upper surface of the planisphere.

"Take a good look at the map," said Mr. Hardy, "and then look at the sky itself."

"The stars are exactly like this map!" cried Lew in astonishment.

"You mean the map is exactly like the stars," corrected Mr. Hardy. "Of course not all the stars are there. The little ones are left out, just as the little brooks and the small hills are left out of a map of the earth. But all the principal stars are there and all the necessary heavenly landmarks."

Every boy in the group took a look through the planisphere and expressed his astonishment.

"Do you know that the stars have names?" asked Mr. Hardy.

Several of the boys knew the names of one or two stars.

"Who named 'em?" inquired George, eager as usual for knowledge.

"I cannot tell you," replied Mr. Hardy.

“Nobody knows who named the stars. They had names before men began to write history. We can hardly appreciate how old the stars are. You boys think of the days of the Revolutionary War and George Washington as far, far away. These very stars were shining when George Washington was leading the men of '76. These same stars guided Christopher Columbus when he came across the Atlantic and discovered America. When Jesus was born, the same stars looked down on the earth. Thousands of years before that, in the days of the Pharaohs and Nebuchadnezzar — who had that hot fire for Daniel's friends, Willie — and before that, in the days when Noah was building his ark, and even before that, when Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden, these same stars looked down on the earth. Practically they never change, they never move, though the astronomers with their telescopes have detected some slight alterations that have taken place during the centuries. The stars are God's guideposts at night. They guided the Arabs over the trackless deserts, they showed the way to the shepherds guarding their flocks by night.”

“It was a great star that told the shepherds of the birth of Jesus,” interrupted Roy. “Can we see that star?”

“No,” returned Mr. Hardy, “because that star, according to the Bible, was a new star that suddenly blazed out. Nobody knows what became of it. But there was a star that suddenly appeared fifteen hundred and seventy-two years after the birth of Christ, that flamed out in the sky brighter than any star the astronomers knew. That star was so bright it could be seen even at noon when the sun was at its brightest. People thought it might be the same star that was seen by the shepherds of Palestine — that told the shepherds of the birth of Jesus, and for a long time the star was called the Pilgrim’s Star. Astronomers no longer believe this was the star of Bethlehem, and now the star is always called Tycho Brahe’s star, after the famous astronomer who made the deepest study of it. In a few months the star began to fade. To-day no one is certain where Tycho’s star was, although astronomers believe that that star is now a little pin point of light that can be seen only with the most powerful telescopes.”

“ You said the stars practically did not change,” said Roy. “ Did n’t this one change? ”

“ Yes, Roy; but this was one of the few exceptions. Most of the stars practically do not change and do not move, so far as we can discover. But a few stars vary. One star, Algol, changes from bright to dim every three days. There is one star, Mira, that alters every eleven months, and another that flames up every seventy years. That is why the astronomers at first thought that Tycho’s star was the star of Bethlehem. They knew that a bright star had been seen at irregular intervals of about three hundred years, and so they reckoned back in three-hundred-year periods and found that this brought them to the time of Christ. So they thought Tycho’s star was the star of Bethlehem.”

“ How did the shepherds know that the bright star in the sky meant that Jesus was born? ” inquired Henry Harper.

“ I ’m glad you asked that question, Henry,” returned Mr. Hardy. “ You see, in olden times people were very superstitious. They believed the stars controlled or affected human affairs. The Hebrews were in the power of the Romans,

you know, and they were looking forward to the birth of a savior that they believed would restore their national power. The stars in a certain part of the sky were believed to affect the fortunes of the Israelites, and when this wonderful, blazing star suddenly appeared in that part of the heavens, they naturally thought that it heralded the coming of the Messiah."

"Were all the thousands of stars in the sky supposed to affect somebody?" asked Jimmy Donnelly.

"I can't tell you about that," returned Mr. Hardy, "but I can tell you something about the number of the stars. How many thousands do you think you can see?"

Jimmy looked upward. "I don't know," he faltered. "There's an awful lot of them."

"Well, Jimmy," replied the camp leader, "no one has ever been able to see more than three thousand stars with the naked eye. But with telescopes an enormous number can be seen. Even a pair of little opera glasses increases the number of the stars from three thousand to one hundred thousand, and the big telescopes in the great observatories have shown more than

one billion stars, according to the estimates of the astronomers. Every time a telescope of greater power is made, more stars are discovered. So no one knows, and probably no one ever will know, just how many stars there are."

Mr. Hardy paused a moment.

"Have you any idea of the size of the stars," he asked, "or of how far away they are?"

"They look about as big as candles," said Henry, "but of course they must be bigger than that, for they are far away. Some of them must be miles away."

"They are bigger and farther away," replied the camp leader, "than any of you realize."

Then turning to Mr. Young, he said, "You know more about these things than I do, Will, for you are an engineer. Tell the boys how big the stars are."

"Does anyone know how big the earth is?" asked the new speaker.

"Twenty-five thousand miles in circumference and eight thousand miles in diameter," answered George.

"Good," said Mr. Young. "It's a pretty big world, isn't it? But it's a mere pea beside

some of those shining bodies up in the sky. Which is the brightest star in sight?"

The boys scanned the heavens carefully.

"That one," they agreed, pointing to a blazing yellow body a little west of the zenith.

"Correct," returned Mr. Young. "That's Arcturus, one of the very brightest stars. In fact there is only one star that is brighter, and you can't see that star until winter, when the earth has moved farther along in its orbit.

"We know how big the earth is. But big as it is, it is small compared to the sun, and the sun in turn is little beside Arcturus. Let us say the earth is a tennis ball. In comparison with that the sun would be a ball twenty-three feet in diameter, while Arcturus would be a ball twenty-three hundred feet or nearly half a mile in diameter. You have all seen pictures of the Woolworth Building, the highest building in the world. If you had a ball three times as thick as the Woolworth Building is high and placed a tennis ball beside it, you could see how the earth compares with Arcturus. We can hardly understand how immense Arcturus is."

"If it is so big," interrupted Jimmy Don-

nelly, "why is n't it brighter? You say it is much bigger than the sun, but it looks like a hand lamp compared to the sun."

"It is bright, Jimmy," replied Mr. Young. "It is terribly bright. It is sixty-two hundred times as bright as the sun. But it is far away. If it were as near as the sun, I presume it would burn us up with its heat. It looks dim because it is so far away."

"It is so far away that the figures would mean nothing to you. But perhaps I can show you its distance in another way. Light probably travels faster than anything else we know of. Light goes so fast that in one second it could go round the earth seven times. A tick of a watch is one-fifth of a second, the smallest fraction of time that can be measured. Yet light can circle the earth once in a single tick of a watch. Now Arcturus is so far away from us that if a beam of light started from that star at this moment, it would take that beam of light one hundred and sixty years to reach us. The light from Arcturus that you are looking at this minute started from that star at the time the French and Indian War began, and has been traveling toward us ever

since at the rate of one hundred and eighty-six thousand miles a second. That's how far away Arcturus is. But the distance is so enormous that we cannot comprehend it."

"Mr. Young, how do the astronomers know all these things?" inquired George.

"That's a hard question to answer, George. When you are older and know something about higher mathematics, perhaps you could understand their methods. All I can tell you now is that by means of their wonderful telescopes and the spectroscope and higher mathematics they make many tests, and these tests are without doubt true. The astronomers know. All that the rest of us can do is to take their word for it. There are hundreds of interesting things to learn about the stars. Some night when the sky is clear again, we can talk some more about the stars. It's pretty late now and we had better turn in."

CHAPTER XV

THE TRIP TO BUCKNELL

EARLY the next morning Mr. Young went up to the Robinson farmhouse and telephoned to the librarian at Bucknell, asking if the latter would be willing to have the campers come to the college to see the Indian relics. The kind-hearted librarian, always ready to accommodate others even at personal inconvenience, made Mr. Young feel that nothing could please him more than to open the library and show the boys the Gerner Collection, as the Bucknell Indian relics are called, in honor of the man whose love of the past led him to gather and preserve these priceless memorials of the days that are gone. So at breakfast Mr. Young announced the trip to Bucknell as the order of the day. A great shout greeted the announcement.

Squad duties were suspended for the time being, because the train left Muncy at eight o'clock and the campers had barely time enough to reach

the station. Indeed by the time the boys were assembled for the journey there remained only thirty minutes. The distance to the station was exactly two miles and a quarter.

“We’ll have to do some fast traveling,” said Mr. Young as he looked at his watch, “but we can make it.”

He led the party at a swift walk down the hillside and along the road for some hundreds of yards.

“Now we’ll go scout pace,” he ordered.

This method of traveling, fifty yards at a walk and fifty at a dogtrot, the campers had practiced on several occasions. Now they swung into a sharp trot, then dropped to a walk, then back to a trot again. The pace carried them over the ground at a fast rate. But it was a close race. The train was already in sight when the party reached the station, and was coming to a grinding stop before Mr. Young received his tickets and his change. The trip was his treat.

The train bore the party swiftly southward, back over the very same route they had traversed on the ride from Central City. They had been in camp less than three weeks, but to the boys it

seemed like a very long time since they had come steaming up this beautiful valley. So much had happened in the meantime. The boys realized as they never had before that in very truth "we live in thoughts, in feelings, not in figures on a dial." The time they had spent in camp had been short, but it had been packed full of unforgettable experiences. The making of the camp, the hike to Fort Brady, the camp fires at night, the spearing of the great carp, the fight with the forest fire, Lew's escape from death — all these things came to their minds as the train sped on; but mostly they thought of Lew and the snake. It was on the train that the first-aid kit had been lost. It was evident that everybody was thinking of this.

"We don't have any bundles this —" began Roy Mercer. Then he stopped short and called to Alec to look at the rapids. Roy was too kind at heart to hurt anyone's feelings. What he had said had slipped from him before he thought.

Mr. Hardy glanced at Lem. The latter winced at Roy's remark. But immediately there came to his face a look of grim determination. It was far different from the old sullen

look. Mr. Hardy smiled with pleasure. He knew Lem was making a mental resolve to keep on in his good ways. Mr. Hardy leaned across the aisle and laid his hand firmly on Lem's shoulder.

"Great country for a camp, isn't it?" he remarked.

Lem understood. He raised his eyes gratefully.

"Indeed it is," he said.

Mr. Hardy pressed Lem's shoulder and sank back in his seat.

"That boy is going to make a good man, Will," he said. "He's got good stuff in him, but nobody ever before tried to bring it out."

When the party reached Lewisburg, after a ride of half an hour, Mr. Young lined the boys up by twos, and in this order they marched out to the college campus. On the way they turned aside, just before reaching a pretty little stream, and made their way to a mill close by. It was in operation, and little puffs of steam were issuing with clock-like regularity from an exhaust pipe.

"This little mill," said Mr. Young, "now runs by steam, as you can see. But once yonder

little stream ran the machinery. In those days the mill was a little structure built of logs. To look at it now, with its smooth weatherboards and its big scales, you would never think it was an old mill. To be sure this particular building is new. But a mill has stood on this spot for nearly a century and a half. Whose mill do you think it was?"

"I know," cried George Larkin. "This must be Derr's mill, and here is where Captain Brady upset the whisky barrel."

"You are entirely correct, George. This is the very spot."

The boys gazed about with interest.

"Think how the country has changed since the time of Captain Brady," said Henry. "Why, this was all forest then. Now we are in a little city. It's wonderful!"

The walk was now resumed. Almost immediately the party came in sight of the campus, at the end of a beautiful avenue lined with elms and maples. At the great stone pillars of the gateway the party paused to survey the campus.

Before them, on the level ground, lay a beautiful unenclosed athletic field with a gym-

nasium behind it. Along the right side of the field the ground rose sharply. On this natural grand stand were long rows of seats, shaded by the towering trees that covered the entire hill. Far above the seats, on the brow of the hill, could be discerned groups of college buildings. On the opposite side of the athletic field, perhaps two hundred yards distant, the Susquehanna swept majestically by.

“As you see,” began Mr. Young, “this is our athletic field.”

“Was it here that Christy Mathewson learned to play ball?” broke in Jimmy Donnelly.

“It was,” replied Mr. Young, “and a great many other famous big league players, whose names you know well, learned the game here. Barclay, Daniels, Blair, Sebring, Wyckoff, and many others got their first idea of the finer points of baseball on yonder diamond. Some of them are dead now. Some are physicians, lawyers, and some are still playing ball. But this is their college home, and they all cherish loyal memories of Bucknell, just as some of you do of the Central City High School.”

The party moved on, mounting the hill by a

path that curved its way upward through the arching trees. There were many buildings on the hill, but time was limited and the campers pushed on through a great quadrangle to a low brick building at the rear, which bore on its walls such names as Shakespeare, Dante, and Milton.

"That is the library," said Mr. Young. "The Gerner Collection is on the second floor."

In the office the librarian was awaiting the party. He was all that Mr. Young had described him to be, a gentle old gentleman, whose face reflected the great good will that filled his heart.

"I'm very glad to see you," he said briefly as he led the way upstairs.

In a minute the boys were absorbed in the Gerner Collection. In great cases on the floor, and in rows of shelves that lined the walls, there were thousands and thousands of Indian implements. None of the boys had ever seen so many aboriginal relics.

"Phew!" said Roy, "it must have taken a long time to collect all these."

The librarian overheard the remark.

"It did, my boy," he said, turning to Roy.

“It took a man the better part of a lifetime. He loved the story of the past and he wanted to preserve these memorials of a vanished people. You are all indebted to his unselfish labors for the pleasure and knowledge that will come to you from your visit to-day.”

“He talks just like Mr. Hardy, does n’t he?” said Roy to Johnnie a little later.

“Yes, and he’s right,” replied Johnnie. “I never thought about what a fellow owes to others until Mr. Hardy pointed it out.”

Then he gave a little cry, for his eye had fallen on a particularly fine group of arrowheads. “‘Found near Fort Brady,’” he read. The boys came flocking round. Some of the arrowheads were long and slender, some thick and short. There were also some very sharp, tiny arrowheads intended for use as poison carriers.

Presently George Larkin called out, “Come here!” The boys flocked about him. In a case before George were some cylindrical stone implements that looked not unlike thin rolling pins without handles. “‘Indian pestles,’” read George, “‘found south of Muncy.’”

"Maybe they were found near the old mortar on Judge Brown's estate," suggested Lem.

Everybody looked to Mr. Hardy for verification of the suggestion.

"I don't know, boys," he said. "The placard does not say exactly where they were discovered. But it may well be that they were picked up in the very ravine by the mortar. That would be a likely place to find them. Now you can see exactly how the Indians made corn meal. They ground the maize in the mortar by crushing it with one end of a pestle. Pretty slow work as compared with the way they make meal at the mill we visited on the way up, was n't it?"

"Why, it must have taken all their time just to get food and prepare it," said Alec.

"You're exactly right," returned Mr. Hardy. "The Indians had a hard time to live. Most of their time went into hunting game or catching fish, or drying meat and tanning skins. You see it was about all they could do to get enough to eat. But they were savages. That's the difference between savagery and civilization. We have a hard enough time to make ends meet, but we have many comforts and pleasures. Think

of our easy life as compared with Captain Brady's or General Burrows'. And even they were far more comfortable than the Indians were."

George Larkin had found some net sinkers that interested him very much, and the party was now invited by George's excited cry to "Come look!" Then Lew found some tomahawks and stone hatchets. Pieces of pottery and some Indian pipes also claimed attention. Carl Dexter was much excited over some skinners, with which the Indians stripped the hides off their game. Carl had taken the pelts of many small animals and knew exactly how these implements were used. As the boys crowded around him he explained how to handle each tool.

Many of the implements had perforations in them, through which a string could be passed. Presently one of the party found the instruments with which these holes were made. These drills were needle-like shafts of hardest flint, of varying lengths, with expanded bases by which they could be grasped and turned.

A little bottle containing a small piece of brownish-yellow material that looked like caked

mustard now attracted attention. “ ‘Material for poisoning arrows,’ ” read Roy.

“ That is the stuff the Indians used on those tiny arrowheads,” said the librarian. “ They made a paste or solution of it and dipped their arrows in it, then let it dry, just as we put mucilage on letter flaps and let it dry. When we wet a letter flap, the mucilage becomes sticky again. When one of those poisoned arrows entered the body, the blood moistened the dried film of poison, and the poison went through the body just as a snake’s poison does — if you know how that is.”

Everybody was silent for a moment. Then Roy said: “ I think it was an awful thing to use poison on arrows. It did n’t give a wounded man a chance.”

“ Only savages fight in such an unfair way,” returned the librarian.

Presently Charley Russell came across a collection of rounded stones that looked like large doorknobs. In the center of one side each stone had a rounded depression.

“ What are these? ” asked Charley.

Everybody looked at the strange implements,

but no one knew their use. The librarian had to tell them. They were handles for fire drills.

“You see, the Indians had no matches,” said the librarian, “nor did they have even flint and steel until long after the white men came. So their only method of making a fire was by friction, by rubbing two sticks together. This was done, not as you might suppose, but by means of certain instruments. When an Indian wanted fire, he put a flat piece of wood on the ground and pressed against it with a pointed stick held down with one of these peculiar-shaped stones. The cavity in the stone is to hold the upper end of the drill. The fire maker looped the string of his bow around the drill and moved his bow rapidly back and forth, like a man sawing. This twirled the drill around, ground the wood to powder, and ignited the powder. Clumsy as this seems, an Indian could start a blaze in less than a minute. To these rude forest dwellers fire was an absolute necessity, so you can see how carefully they treasured their fire drills. These were as important to the Indian as matches are to us. Even the early white men guarded their fires, though they had flint and steel.”

Now Lem found a net sinker marked "Lycoming Creek."

"That's the stream the rangers crossed so many times on the way to Tioga, isn't it?" asked George.

"You have a good memory," replied Mr. Hardy. "It is."

Then Johnnie Lee found a mortar marked "Wolf Run."

"That must be from the Indian headquarters near Fort Brady," said Willie Brown, "where we heard about Captain Brady's death."

"And where we heard a crow," added Roy. Everybody laughed at that.

"Well, boys," said Mr. Young, "we'll have to be moving. Our train leaves at a quarter of twelve."

"Train time!" exclaimed Roy in astonishment. "Already?"

"Yes," returned Mr. Young. "We had only two hours to spend in Lewisburg, and there is just time enough to get back to the station."

The boys thanked the librarian very warmly. It had been a memorable morning. Then with a last look at some particularly beautiful arrow-

heads, they filed downstairs and made for the station at a fast pace. They reached Muncy before half past twelve and were at camp soon after one o'clock. Al had dinner waiting for them.

"Fellows," said Henry as they took their seats, "let's give three cheers for Mr. Young."

The campers jumped to their feet and made the tent ring.

CHAPTER XVI

A TEST OF MARKSMANSHIP

INCLUDED in the camp equipment were three revolvers. The two leaders had brought their own pistols, because, although they anticipated no danger, they thought it best to be on the safe side. Desperate characters sometimes wander about the country, and should anyone try to rob the camp, they wanted to be armed. Then several of the boys had asked if they might bring firearms. The question had been considered duly, and finally Mr. Hardy had announced that Carl Dexter might bring his pistol. There was discontent at this, for it looked like favoritism, but Mr. Hardy had quickly made the boys feel differently about the matter.

“You see, Carl has proved his carefulness and his ability to handle a pistol, because he has owned a pistol for two years and has never gotten into trouble through it,” said Mr. Hardy. “And it would n’t be fair to punish Carl because of the inability of others.

“Just as soon as the rest of you prove yourselves as marksmen and show that you can be trusted with pistols,” Mr. Hardy had told them, “you may bring as many firearms to camp as you like. We are going to make it a point in our camps — for we may go camping again you know — to let every boy do the things he wants to just as fast as he proves he is man enough to be trusted.”

So Carl had brought along his pistol, and the boys were entirely contented with the situation. But naturally they were extremely eager to qualify as marksmen. And so almost from the start, pistol practice had held a place in the camp sports together with baseball, swimming, and paddling.

The pistol range was on the south side of the clearing. A large rock stood just at the edge of the forest on this side of the camp, and against the rock the target was placed. This consisted of a sheet of white paper about two feet square, with a bull's-eye in the center surrounded by concentric rings. The bull's-eye was one inch in diameter. The target was fastened on a board and the holes made by the bullets were

covered up with white paper stickers that Carl had brought along. The firing line was fifteen yards from the target.

Some amusing things had happened during pistol practice. On the first day of practice all the boys excepting Carl had been given three shots around, so that the camp leaders could get an idea of each boy's ability. Each was sure he could hit the bull's-eye, and those who had wanted to bring pistols were, of course, most eager to make a good showing. They had begun their firing at this first practice with supreme confidence. The target was only forty-five feet away. They could n't miss it! But boy after boy had retired crestfallen after his three shots. Hitting a bull's-eye at forty-five feet, the boys found, was no easy thing to do. Nobody had come anywhere near the center of the target. Roy and Henry each got a bullet within the third ring, but the rest of the boys were barely able to hit the sheet of paper. Indeed many of the bullets flattened on the rock entirely outside of the white sheet.

And when Willie Brown took his turn, the bullets never even hit the rock. At the first shot

Mr. Hardy thought perhaps a blank cartridge had gotten into the pistol, but when the second and third shots missed the rock, he knew the fault was with Willie.

“Let Willie try again,” he ordered.

So Willie got three more trials. He raised his weapon and aimed carefully. The pistol seemed to be leveled right, but again the bullet flew out into the forest. Mr. Hardy stepped behind Willie.

“Aim again,” he said. Willie did. “You are not pointing anywhere near the target,” said Mr. Hardy.

“I’m aiming right at it,” replied Willie.

The camp leader was puzzled. “Shoot,” he said. Once more the bullet flew wide of the rock. “Willie, which eye were you aiming with?” asked Mr. Young.

“The left one,” replied Willie. “I closed the right one.”

The boys sent up a shout at this, and even the camp leaders joined in the laugh. “Try aiming with the other eye,” said Mr. Young.

Willie did so, and this time his bullet hit the edge of the paper. “You can shoot about as

well as the rest of them, Willie," said Mr. Young, "now that you know how. But that is n't much of a compliment."

The camp leaders with Carl — and really it was Carl, for he could shoot better than either of the leaders — had then taken the boys in hand and shown them how to stand, how to poise the weapon, how to aim, and particularly how to hold the pistol. Most of them had been gripping the pistol butt very tightly and squeezing down hard when they fired. That depressed the pistol and spoiled the aim. Now Carl showed each boy how to grasp the pistol firmly but lightly, how to hold his arm loose instead of rigid, and how to move only his trigger finger in firing. Many times each boy went through the motion of shooting until he had learned to pull the trigger with perfect steadiness.

"Now let's do a little more real shooting," said Mr. Hardy after this imitation firing.

The pistols were loaded and the boys again had three shots apiece. There was a marked improvement in the shooting, and although nobody came near making a bull's-eye, all of the bullets fired now hit the paper.

“Willie,” said Mr. Hardy when Willie’s turn came, “here’s a thing you can do as well as anybody. You can’t run as fast as Jimmy because your legs are too short, and you can’t throw a ball as far as Henry because he is so much stronger than you. But in shooting a pistol you are just as good as anybody. If you can control your hand and arm and keep your aim steady, you can shoot as well as any of us. It is merely a matter of self-confidence.”

And Willie had shown that he was beginning to have some self-confidence by putting a bullet just outside of the first ring around the bull’s-eye.

Two or three times each week the boys gathered for an hour’s pistol practice. It was surprising how they grew in proficiency. After that very first practice there had hardly been a bullet that missed the sheet of paper entirely. There were few that did not leave a black mark at least within the outer circle of the target. As one practice period succeeded another the skill of the campers increased so that the black dots grew more numerous within the first circle around the bull’s-eye, and not infrequently Carl

was called upon for a black sticker to mend a puncture in the bull's-eye itself. It soon became apparent that Roy and Charley and Jimmy and Willie were developing into the best marksmen.

About a week before the return to Central City a shooting contest was held right after dinner one day. Each boy was to have five shots. A bull's-eye was to count one hundred points, a bullet in the first ring counted twenty-five points, in the second ring fifteen, in the third ring ten, and in the fourth ring five points. Bullets striking outside of the fourth ring counted nothing. Carl generously said that he would not compete with the other campers.

Each boy was eager to win the contest. The highest possible score, five bull's-eyes, would net five hundred points. Of course none of the contestants hoped to make any such score. Mr. Hardy decided that the firing should be done in alphabetical order, beginning with Alec and ending with Willie.

So Alec took a loaded pistol and stepped to the firing line. He was very nervous. He raised his pistol and aimed, then lowered it and aimed

again. But it was not until he had taken still another aim that he pulled the trigger. Nothing showed on the target. Alec looked chagrined. He was just about to fire his second shot when Mr. Young raised his hand.

"Wait a minute," he said. Then he walked over to the target. "I thought as much," he called out. "Alec has made a bull's-eye."

The bullet had buried itself in the black heart of the target in such a way that the bull's-eye looked untouched. A shout went up at Alec's success. And Alec himself smiled. His bull's-eye, however, was all a matter of luck, for his second and third shots barely came within the third ring, and his last two shots almost missed the scoring area altogether. So he had two fives, two tens, and one hundred, a total of a hundred and thirty points.

Charley Russell shot next. Charley was as nervous as Alec had been and started badly. His first shot brought him five points. That nettled him and he settled down. His second shot was very close to the bull's-eye. It counted twenty-five for him. His third shot hit the line dividing the first and second zones. Mr. Hardy

ruled that it was within the first zone. So Charley added twenty-five more to his score. His fourth shot was not quite so good and brought him only fifteen points. Charley shut his teeth tight together, took a quick but steady aim, and fired his last shot. It was a clean bull's-eye. His total score was one hundred and seventy points.

George and Henry shot next. Each scored less than a hundred points. Then Jimmy took his place on the firing line. His practice as a baseball pitcher stood him in good stead, for he was as cool as a cucumber. His hand was as steady as a steel bar as he raised his pistol, sighted quickly, and fired. His bullet just missed the bull's-eye. His second shot was just outside of the first circle. His third shot was a clean bull's-eye. His remaining two shots almost hit the center of the target. A quarter of an inch closer and he would have scored a hundred points with each. Jim's score was one fifteen, three twenty-fives, and one hundred, making a total of one hundred and ninety points.

No one else scored anywhere nearly as many points until Roy took his turn. He was the tenth to shoot. Roy did very well. He got a

hundred and eighty-five points. If it had not been for a bad third shot, which hit the second circle, he might have beaten Jimmy.

Willie Brown shot last. Willie had acquired both skill and confidence during his various practices. He was so eager now to show his ability that he almost defeated himself. His hand was trembling visibly when he raised his pistol for his first shot. Mr. Hardy noticed it.

"Wait a minute, Willie," he called. "It does n't make a bit of difference if you do miss the target, because we'll have some more contests after awhile. Just take your time."

Willie lost some of his nervousness. He raised his pistol and fired. The bullet hit the first circle.

"Twenty-five," called Mr. Young, who was keeping tally. Willie fired again.

"One hundred," cried Mr. Young. "You are doing very well indeed."

It was a bull's-eye. The third shot added twenty-five more to Willie's score. So did the fourth. His total was now a hundred and seventy-five points. Only Roy and Jimmy were ahead of him now and Willie had one shot re-

maining. He had an excellent chance to win the match. It was a good test of his nerve.

"I'll show them," Willie muttered to himself. Then he fired. He did show them. His bullet went straight to the center of the target.

"Another bull's-eye," announced Mr. Young. "Total score two hundred and seventy-five. Willie wins the match."

"Excellent," cried Mr. Hardy as he came over and patted Willie on the shoulder. "Mr. Young was right when he said a fellow could do a thing if he only thought he could, was n't he, Willie?"

"Indeed he was," replied Willie, who was smiling with pride. Jimmy Donnelly was disappointed at losing, but generously came up and congratulated Willie on his success. The others crowded around with words of praise.

"Well, if Willie can learn to shoot so well, I guess the rest of us can too," said Alec. "I am going to try harder after this."

"Me too," echoed half a dozen voices.

Now the paper target was removed and a broad-headed nail driven into the board. The boys had been discussing the feat of the Leather

Stocking in hitting a nail on the head during a rifle contest.

"It might be done with a rifle," George Larkin had said, "but it could n't be done with a pistol."

"Not at such a great distance," Carl had replied, "but at the ordinary pistol range it could."

So now Carl was going to endeavor to hit a nail with his pistol bullet. He stepped to the firing line and shot two shots at a little mark in the rock, "just to limber up" as he put it.

"Now for the nail," he said as he leveled his pistol for the third time. The bullet scraped the head of the nail and buried itself in the wood. His next shot hit the nail a little more fairly, but also went into the board, after a portion of the lead was shaved off by the nail. The third shot struck the nail squarely and dropped to the ground. All three bullets had touched the head of the nail. It was a wonderful exhibition of shooting. The boys looked on in astonishment.

"I'd be very proud of myself," said Mr. Hardy, "if I could shoot like that."

"And I too," added Mr. Young.

"Gee! he shoots like a regular cowboy," said

Roy Mercer. "He'd be a good fellow to have along if you were held up by robbers." Everybody laughed at the idea.

"Your suggestion of robbers," said Mr. Hardy, "reminds me of the fact that years ago there used to be a desperate band of robbers that had their headquarters in some caves down the river."

"Robbers' caves!" yelled Roy. "Can we see 'em?"

"Sure!" answered Mr. Hardy.

"When?" inquired Roy.

"Any time you like."

"Let's go now," urged Roy.

"Come on!" cried all the boys.

"Very well," said Mr. Hardy.

So the pistols were slipped into pockets and the party started for the river road, with Roy and Johnnie running excitedly ahead and calling, "Robbers' cave; come on!"

CHAPTER XVII

CARL MEETS WITH AN ADVENTURE

THE party went south along the river. All the while the hillside grew steeper. Beginning with the gentle slope in front of their camp, the land gradually rose upward at a sharper inclination. In a few hundred yards it had become too steep for cultivation.

Here was the scrub growth that constituted such a danger at the time of the fire. This scrub growth extended from the water's edge up the hill to the line of the forest. Along the river it stretched for perhaps a quarter of a mile.

Beyond this the steep slope was broken by a narrow, level strip like a huge niche in the side of the mountain. This niche was high above the water. It was only a few yards wide. On this ledge fisherman Jim had his home. Here, like an eagle in his aerie, he could look out over the broad expanse of the river and see for miles both upstream and down. He occupied a log house,

built of squared timbers, chinked with clay. It was fisherman Jim who had supplied the torch when Al went gigging.

Back of fisherman Jim's the mountain, which now rose very sharply, was covered from base to summit with a thick forest growth. Here the mountain began to assume a rugged aspect. Its sides were too steep to retain the soil, and the bare bones of the hill began to appear. There were single rocks that projected outward. There were little stones and huge bowlders, held in some incomprehensible way on the side of the steep slope and apparently ready to come crashing down without an instant's notice. Great ledges of ragged rocks thrust themselves out, their harsh outlines barely softened by growths of moss and lichen.

Farther down the river the party could see that the mountain grew ever steeper, rising at length as sheer as the side of a house, while the little ledge on which the road lay became narrower and narrower until it was hardly more than a footpath. One needed to be sure-footed in traversing it, for in places it was so narrow that a single misstep would send one crashing

down the face of the precipice to the water some fifty feet below.

Opposite fisherman Jim's was an island close to the farther shore. In length it was perhaps three hundred yards. It was evidently very narrow, and when viewed from fisherman Jim's side of the river, seemed to be a mere streak of sand and stone. The edges of this little island were lined with sandy beach, but the middle was covered thickly with stones of good size. In the center was what looked like a great stone heap that rose several feet above the general level, projecting upward like the turret of a warship.

Roy first called attention to the island. "That wouldn't be a bad place to camp," he said. "You could put your tents on the beach and keep your canoes in the little neck of water behind the island."

"Yes, it would be all right for a camp," said Mr. Hardy, "if a flood did n't happen to come along."

"Gee! I never thought of that," said Roy. "The island would be under water in a flood, would n't it?"

"Yes," responded Mr. Hardy, "a flood would



completely cover it. In fact it was a flood that made that island."

"How could a flood do that?" asked Robert Martin.

"What is now the island, Robert," answered Mr. Hardy, "was once part of the mainland. The heap of stones in the middle of the island is what is left of the foundations of a great house. The house stood some yards back from the shore. Then there came an awful flood which began to sweep away the earth—you notice it is very sandy over there—until a great slice of the bank, probably two hundred feet wide, was carried away. That left the house right out in the raging river, and it was n't very long before the house collapsed and went floating downstream. I think the barn was washed away at the same time."

The party stopped and looked at the island in astonishment.

"Why did n't the river take the island too?" asked Henry.

"You notice that the island is covered with stones," replied Mr. Hardy. "The land all around it was nothing but sand. But just where

the island is there was this deposit of stones. The river could n't sweep them away, so that is why the island remained."

"What became of the people in the house?" asked Willie.

"I can't tell you very much about that," replied Mr. Hardy. "I know a great deal about the older history of this region, but very little about what has happened here in recent years. You had better ask fisherman Jim or Al Jordan. They have lived along the river all their lives and can tell you about everything that has happened for the last fifty years."

The party took a last look at the little island and continued on their way.

"Let's take a canoe and go over there some time," said Roy to Johnnie as they resumed their walk.

A short distance below fisherman Jim's the highway turned to the left, off through a notch which here split the fence of the mountain. Beyond this point there remained only the footpath, along which it was necessary for the most part to go in single file. It was exceedingly rugged. The great hill towered above them on

the left, while below them on the right the waves were lapping at the base of the gray rocks. Centuries of weathering had cut little gullies and channels and even some very deep depressions in the face of the cliff.

This mountain, lying parallel with the river, faced slightly to the northwest. Its perpendicular face therefore lay in the shadow for a large part of the day, getting the direct rays of the sun only in the afternoon. This made the path they were following a delightful place for a walk in the morning, though the sun was now pouring down hotly on the party.

The lack of morning sunlight affected the vegetation as well. The boys now found various flowers and blossoms that normally should have disappeared earlier in the season. Mr. Young called attention to this. The boys looked about eagerly in search of flower treasures. In tiny crannies of the rock were minute fern growths. Delicate little harebells dotted the face of the cliff, swaying gently in the breeze. The clustered blossoms of the garlic were sprinkled liberally about. Here and there appeared a solitary stalk of that beautiful yellow flower commonly

called butter and eggs. Below them at the base of the cliff the boys saw occasional solitary stalks of the flaming cardinal flower.

Among the larger growths along the path were thimbleberry and blackberry bushes and clumps of the ninebark. In the thickly shaded little ravines in the face of the cliff were occasional thickets of rhododendron. At intervals clusters of belated rhododendron blossoms showed pink through the heavy, dark green foliage. These were prizes indeed, could they but have been reached. Mostly they were well up the side of the hill, or else the face of the cliff was too steep to be scaled. So the campers could get none of them.

But presently the party reached a spot where a very deep notch broke the face of the cliff. This notch, like a tall, narrow letter V, cut down to within twenty-five feet of the path on which they were walking. The bottom of the notch was filled with a dense growth of rhododendron and other evergreens.

Carl Dexter suddenly spied an unusually beautiful cluster of blossoms.

“Look!” he cried,

The party stopped.

"I believe I can get them," said Carl.

The blossoms were hardly more than twenty feet above his head. The cliff just here was of the formation known as chimney rocks, and afforded innumerable crevices and openings for hand and toe holds. Furthermore, the inclination of the cliff just here was not quite so steep as at other points. At the top of the chimney rocks there seemed to be a sort of level platform on which a climber could get a firm foothold while plucking blossoms.

"I don't believe you had better try it, Carl," said Mr. Hardy.

"It's easy," replied Carl. "Anybody could climb that."

"I don't mean that you could n't climb it," answered Mr. Hardy, "but I was thinking that if you should slip and fall, you would be badly hurt and perhaps killed. The ledge is so narrow here that it would never stop you and you would go clear into the river. You had better not go up, Carl."

"I'd like very much to have those flowers, Mr. Hardy. I have never picked a rhododen-

dron blossom in my life and I should like to see exactly what one is like."

"What about it, Will?" said Mr. Hardy, turning to his colleague.

"We have to take a few chances for the sake of science," replied Mr. Young with a laugh. "He can make it all right."

So Carl started up. The climb really was easy. He had abundant finger and toe holds and the hard rock held firmly. The sun's rays shone into every crevice, and even as Carl was climbing, a sunbeam filtered down through the foliage and fell on the little cluster of pink blossoms, lighting them up like a guiding torch.

It took Carl only a minute or two to climb within reach of the narrow, rocky platform. Just as he was reaching for this with his right hand, an overhanging twig caught his cap and nearly brushed it from his head. Carl grabbed for the cap and caught it. He took it off. The cap was in his way. He held it for a second as though puzzled, then tossed it upward to the little rock platform. Again he grasped the topmost rock with his right hand and drew himself up. As his eyes reached the level of the platform he

started back and almost lost his foothold. On the edge of the platform, coiled and ready to strike, lay an enormous copperhead. Carl's cap had struck and angered it.

Instantly Carl snatched his right hand away from the top of the rock and leaned back as far as he could. He was badly frightened. He did not know what to do. He stood motionless, trying to think. It came to him that the slightest movement on his part would cause the snake to strike. He could not climb up. He dared not jump down. That was certain death. But he could not long hold himself motionless in such a difficult position. He did not even dare to speak. At first the campers below thought Carl had stopped in his climb merely to look at something. Then they saw that he was holding himself away from the rock.

"What's the trouble, Carl?" called Mr. Hardy.

There was no reply.

Mr. Hardy stepped back along the path a few yards to obtain a view of the top of the platform. Then he saw the snake. Its head was raised several inches in air. At intervals it swayed a

little. For a copperhead it was enormous. Its body was as thick as a woman's wrist. Its ugly triangular head was widely expanded.

"Don't move!" called Mr. Hardy in a low voice.

He realized that one swift, darting blow of the sharp fangs meant death. The shock would almost certainly send Carl tumbling backward down the cliff. The others crowded about Mr. Hardy. For half a minute they stood as though paralyzed. No one knew what to do. Mute, breathless, they waited for something to happen.

Then Carl showed the stuff he was made of. Slowly, almost imperceptibly, his right hand began to move downward. Inch by inch his hand crept toward his coat pocket. His body never stirred. All the while the snake lay coiled, still swaying its head, and awaiting only the slightest motion on Carl's part to strike. A prematurely faded leaf fell from a tree above, fluttered downward, and dropped beside the serpent. There was an ominous move of the ugly head. Still the snake did not strike. Carl's hand crept closer and closer to his pocket. The campers watched. They were puzzled.

"He's getting his pistol," suddenly whispered Mr. Hardy.

He was right. Carl's hand disappeared under the flap of his pocket. Slowly, cautiously, almost imperceptibly, he drew it forth. He had his pistol — cocked. He had cocked it in his pocket. Now he began to raise his weapon upward in the same slow, gliding fashion by which he had gotten it. Inch by inch he raised his hand. From time to time the snake moved its head. It was still alert, still angry. To the campers below it seemed like many minutes before Carl had his pistol high enough to shoot.

The danger was now increased. The snake noticed the pistol as it came upward within its line of vision. The snake was alarmed. Once it moved its head quickly as though about to strike. Carl's heart stopped beating. But he kept his hand steady and slid the pistol higher and higher. The campers below dared not utter a sound. They could only stand and watch. They saw that Carl was drawing back from the rock as far as he possibly could. He was trying to aim. The pistol was barely up to the level of his chin. Could he shoot true in this cramped

position? The snake would strike with the fall of the trigger. The campers stood breathless.

Once Carl was ready to fire. They could see his fingers move. The snake saw them too. It swayed its head. Carl dared not shoot. The snake became quiet again. Suddenly there was a flash. The pistol cracked. There was a thrashing sound on the ledge. An instant later a long brown body came tumbling over the edge of the rock, struck the ledge where the campers stood, bounded outward, and went whirling downward, to sink from sight beneath the shining waters. At the same instant Mr. Hardy's voice rang out.

"Go on up!" he cried. "Go on up, Carl!"

Carl tossed his pistol ahead of him, drew himself upward, and fell forward on the platform. In another instant Mr. Hardy was scrambling up the chimney rock to his aid. He found him completely unstrung. Carl attempted to get up.

"Just stay there awhile," said Mr. Hardy.

Then he made a rapid examination of the notch to see if other snakes might be near. Copperheads often travel in pairs. Presently he came back to Carl, who was already recovering.

"That was a wonderful shot, Carl," said Mr. Hardy. "How'd you do it?" The camp leader was too wise to talk about the danger.

Carl told how he had often practiced shooting from the hip and the side, just as the cowboys used to shoot.

"I had to aim altogether by guess," said Carl. "But I was so close to him and his head was so big I could n't miss him."

"It was a wonderful shot," said Mr. Hardy. By this time Carl had nearly recovered his composure.

"We'll go down now," said Mr. Hardy. "The others are waiting for us."

They started to descend. Suddenly Carl drew back.

"I came after that rhododendron blossom," he said, "and I'm not going back without it."

He scrambled back and plucked the treasure. Then they climbed slowly backward down the chimney rock. Mr. Hardy stayed close beside Carl to support him if he slipped. But Carl had his nerve back now and was in no need of assistance.

The party went on down the river to the

notch in the mountain where the robber caves were located. But they were destined to be disappointed. They found the site without trouble, but they found an opening very different from the one they had looked for. The owner of the land had opened a quarry just where the caves had been. Now there was nothing to see more romantic than a great hole in the cliff, with some machinery in it.

The party went back to camp disappointed but not altogether dissatisfied with their jaunt. They had had a wonderful walk along the face of the cliff, and Carl's adventure with the copper-head gave them something to talk about for a long time. Certainly it was becoming a more wonderful camp every day.

CHAPTER XVIII

AL JORDAN TELLS A STORY

AT the camp fire one night soon after this Al Jordan, sitting on the selfsame cracker box on which the boys had first seen him, told the story of the great flood that carried away the house across the river from fisherman Jim's.

“ You never heerd such a roarin' noise as there was when all them logs come downstream,” began Al. “ You see, the water come up so sudden there was n't nobody expectin' it. So everything just floated off. There was logs by the millions, and piles of lumber as high as houses, and boats, and buildings, and trees, and pianos, and everything you could think of just come rampagin' downstream, knockin' together, batterin' down houses and bridges, and gougin' out the bank. I never heerd nothin' like it. The old soldiers say the bombardment at Gettysburg was tame alongside of the noise of them poundin' logs. They kept thumpin' and poundin' together till you could n't hear a man shout two feet away.

“ Well, I lived along the river in a little cabin at that time. When I went to bed the river was high, but there was n’t nothin’ to indicate the flood that come next day. The water was n’t over the bank nowhere. We did n’t calculate it would raise much higher. But ’long about daylight I was woke up by the worst noise I ever heerd. I got up to look out and stepped into a foot of water. You bet I did n’t waste no time gettin’ out of that house. It was only a little board shack, and I knowed if the water got much higher, it would float off and me in it. I was n’t hankerin’ to go downstream in no such boat. So I grabbed a few things I could carry and struck out for dry land. I did n’t get out none too soon, neither, for the cabin soon floated off. I had to wade through water three feet deep to get ashore. The logs and trees kept bumpin’ into me. Once two logs caught my leg and I thought it was busted clean off.”

“ Is that the way you lost your foot, Al?” asked Roy.

“ Well, I did n’t lose my foot that time,” answered Al evasively. “ Them logs only give me an awful pinch. They did n’t break no bones.

But I tell you I was glad when I got up on the hill out of reach of any more logs."

"Where was your cabin, Al?" asked Henry.

"Oh, down in a low place, just below where you have your boats. It was just a summer shanty."

"What about the house that was washed away?" said George.

"Well, I was comin' to that," continued Al. "When I waded ashore it was still dark. But pretty soon daylight come. There was n't a foot of the river that was n't filled with logs and other stuff. The drift covered the stream like a carpet. A fellow with a pair of calked shoes could have walked from bank to bank on the logs. There was houses, and lumber piles twenty feet high, and parts of bridges, and sheds, and henhouses, and barns, and boats, and everything that you could think of, all floatin' downstream in one solid mass. The way them things kept a-grindin' together and bumpin' and rammin' and roarin' was something awful."

The big cook got to his feet and began to walk up and down before the fire. The recollection of the flood seemed to stir him deeply. His eyes

flashed, and he began to gesticulate wildly as he described the progress of the flood.

“Why, them logs just tried to crawl on top of one another,” he went on. “They was like so many mad alligators. One of them would come shootin’ up out of the water headfirst and drop on the others with an awful crack. Then half a dozen would go end up and begin to batter one another. You’d have thought they was alive the way they crawled about and jumped on each other and battered one another about. The noise was terrible. And the logs in the timber patch just across the river made so much noise batterin’ against the trees you’d have thought a whole battle was goin’ on over there. The batterin’ of them trees and logs never stopped for a single minute.

“All the while them logs kept a-jabbin’ away at the bank, rubbin’ it and buttin’ it and jabbin’ it and leapin’ against it. They did n’t do much damage on this side ’cause the bank is mostly riprapped with stone. But over on the other shore they soon began to eat a big hole. There was n’t no rocks to protect the bank there. Every time a log would jam into the bank it took away

a scoopful of sand. You could just see the bank crumble away before them logs.

“ I soon see that the houses would be in danger if the river rose any more. There was the big farmhouse and the barn and a little tenant house behind it, some distance upstream. They was all near the river bank, and the logs kept eatin’ out the bank at an awful rate. After awhile the water got up over the shore. You could n’t see how the bank was standin’ it. But I knowed it was goin’ fast. The logs was piled up sometimes six feet deep. All the bottom logs was fightin’ to get on top, and the top ones was slidin’ down to the bottom. And all the time they was grindin’ out the bank and the water was washin’ it away as fast as the logs dug it up.

“ Nobody thought the water would get so high, but it kept raisin’ hour after hour. The people that lived in the house took all their things and put them in the second story. There was a kitchen that had been built on to the house, and they figured that would go sure; but nobody believed the house would go. So they took their things upstairs and then went off to stay with a neighbor till the flood went down.

"The water got higher and higher. Pretty soon the river was a roarin' lake that stretched from the foothills of Bald Eagle almost to the foot of this here rock wall. First thing you know you could see the old house movin'. The water was so high it lifted it clean off its foundations. And after awhile it tore the house loose from the kitchen and took it downstream. Yes, sir, there was that big two-story house floatin' down with the current and that little kitchen buildin' left standin' in its tracks. You never would have believed it."

"What became of the house?" asked George.

"It floated downstream for more than a dozen miles," answered Al. "Then it got into an eddy and drifted up into a field, where it stranded. It was right side up, but tilted to one side."

"Did the owners get their property back?" asked Roy.

"Yes," said Al, "after they paid the owner of the field damages for trespass. What do you think of that? The farmer that owned that field would n't let them go near their house until they paid him damages. Did you ever hear of anything as mean as that?"

Al's eyes blazed with indignation. He shook his fist threateningly downstream.

"No, sir," he continued, "he would n't let them sufferin' shipwrecked people that had lost everything they owned get a single stick of their furniture or stuff till they paid him for trespassin' on his fields."

None of the campers had ever seen a big flood, but their knowledge of how the little creek at Central City rose in the spring helped them to understand the awfulness of this catastrophe. They were full of questions. Finally Robert asked how often floods occurred in the Muncy valley.

"I can answer that," said Mr. Hardy. "The Indians had a tradition that a big flood came every fourteen years, when the waters rose six or seven feet higher than the usual spring freshets. And for a long time it looked as though the Indian tradition were well founded. The first big flood on record that the white men observed was in 1744. For three quarters of a century after that great floods came regularly at fourteen-year intervals. Then as the forests began to grow thinner, the floods came oftener. There

were six disastrous floods in less than thirty years. Since 1892 there have been several bad floods, though the flood of 1889 still holds the record.

“It is the destruction of the forests that is largely responsible for these awful catastrophes. The roots of the trees used to hold back a large part of the water, and they protected the river banks as well. Now there are few trees to hold the flood waters back, and the rushing current carries away yearly hundreds of acres of farm lands.

“The flood Al was telling you about was that of 1892. I want to tell you something about the flood of 1889, because I want you to know why Al was so impressed by the rush of logs in the river. That flood was the worst that ever swept this valley. It occurred at the same time that the great Johnstown flood did, and both were occasioned by the same two-day downpour of rain. When the people of this valley woke up on the morning of the third day, June first, this valley was just as Al has described it, with water reaching from Bald Eagle to this very hillside. In the center of this great sheet of water the

main current swept along a thousand feet wide, carrying houses, barns, furniture, bridges, lumber, and logs by the millions. This mass was swept along at ten or twelve miles an hour, and how fast it went in the rifts no man knows.

“Up at the end of Bald Eagle Mountain the flood swept away whole farms, just as it took the land Al has been telling you about. One man lost ten acres, another twenty, another fifty, another sixty-eight, and so on. You can go up to the end of the mountain now and you will find a great tract of barren land on which nothing will grow. Once that land was green with crops, for the region contained some of the richest farms in the whole valley. To-day the place is a great stone pile. The soil was all swept away in that awful flood, leaving the earth's bare bones as mute witnesses of the disaster.

“But what I wanted most to tell you about was how Al became impressed by the logs. I was going to say, how Al became afraid of logs. But Al is n't any more afraid of logs than you are of sparrows. Only he knows now what they can do. But he'd go right out among them again if need arose.”

“Did he get caught by logs?” asked Roy, who began to scent an adventure.

“Indeed he did,” answered Mr. Hardy, “and this is how he came to be caught. When the river got over its banks, the logs began to jam under the old wooden railway bridge that preceded the present steel structure. There were logs and lumber piles that had been floated off without ever disturbing a stick, and there were buildings and trees. But mostly it was logs. There were millions of them. They jammed under the railroad bridge and began to dam the water back. All the while they were working up and down, writhing in the swift current, sawing back and forth, but they could n’t get loose. The new logs kept piling up on top of the old ones, or jamming in underneath them, until there was a solid jam of timber that stretched upstream for hundreds of yards.

“Everybody knew that unless this jam could be broken the bridge would be swept away. It was just a matter of time. And it did n’t appear as though any human agency could ever move the logs. There were lumbermen a-plenty in the town, men who were used to handling logs and

breaking up jams, but never one of them would venture an effort against that log jam. They said it meant sure death. So things stood, with everybody crowded along the water's edge waiting for the bridge to go, when Al came along. Al took a good look at the log jam. He saw a movement among the logs under the third span.

“ ‘Give me a peavey,’ he said, and picking up a cant hook and an axe, he started toward the middle of the river. They tried to hold him back, but Al shook them off. He could n't travel on the bridge because it was covered and there was no way to get out on the logs. So he jumped out on the jam and went leaping from one log to another out to the third span.

“ He was on the downstream side of the bridge, at the downstream edge of the jam. If the bridge went, it was sure death for Al. And if he started the logs, it was about the same thing. There was no way for him to get out. He knew that. But he went to the edge of the jam and started to work, picking out one log after another and cutting out the logs that he could n't roll. Al made quite a hole in the jam. He had been at work a couple of hours, perhaps, when

the whole mass of logs began to move. They groaned and writhed like a man in agony. Everybody shouted for Al to come ashore. He could n't hear them, and he would n't have come if he had heard them. But he heard the movement of the logs and stopped working long enough to take a look at the mass. There was this wall of logs a thousand feet wide and hundreds of yards long just squirming about, trying to get at him. And before Al knew what happened they had him.

“The bridge slid off its foundations, the jam of logs gave one awful roar and began to shoot between the stone piers, and in a second Al was swimming for his life in the midst of a million logs. He had about as much chance for his life as a mouse has in a mill hopper. The logs were cracking together in a way that would have smashed him to a pancake if he had been caught between them. Al knew that his only chance was to get up on top of a log. He managed to do it, and then started for shore, jumping from log to log. He had on calked shoes, so he did n't slip, but the logs were rolling over and over and sawing up and down as they fought one another.

It was mighty ticklish business, and only his great experience with logs enabled Al to keep on top of the pack.

“He kept on dodging and jumping and scrambling from log to log, until it really looked as though he were going to get ashore. In fact he got within seventy-five yards of the shore when the log to which he had just jumped was suddenly shot upward by the pressure below, and Al went headforemost into the river. He came to the surface safely, hitting an open spot as miraculously as he had the first time, and was trying to climb on another log when that one too gave a heave, and again Al went down. A log hit him on the head and almost stunned him. At the same instant two logs came together head on, catching Al's leg between them. Something bore them down to the bottom, and Al was dragged down underneath the pack with them. He does n't know to this day how he got loose. He was too nearly stunned to know. But he finally found himself free. He had just strength enough left to fight his way to the surface, where he hit another open spot, and throw an arm over a log. After that he knew nothing.

“But I know what happened. The men on the bank had run downstream opposite Al as he was struggling to get ashore. They saw him go down and they saw him come up. The logs that had bucked and upset Al had swung into an eddy, and when Al came to the surface, he was within forty yards of the shore and out of the current. Here the logs were floating around in a circle. There was a boat handy on the shore, and the men on the bank grabbed it and fought their way through the logs to Al. When they lifted him out, his cheek was laid open and his leg was gone. It had been pinched clear off by the impact of those two logs. Somebody had the presence of mind to tie a strip of his shirt around Al’s leg, and that is why we have a live cook with us to-day instead of a dead hero to talk about.”

Mr. Hardy turned toward Al, his face beaming with the great affection he held in his heart for this rugged son of toil.

“Yes, boys, he added, “we have a live cook and a live hero as well. I want you all to know what a remarkable man your fellow camper is.”

Al’s face turned red even under its coat of tan.

He was not accustomed to such praise. But his embarrassment was the embarrassment of pleasure rather than of annoyance. The boys came crowding about him with a thousand questions. He was unschooled in the finer arts of conversation and hardly knew how to meet this sudden turn in the talk. So he merely growled, " 'T was n't nothin'. Mr. Hardy has just been tellin' you that to make a good story."

But the campers knew, every one of them, that Mr. Hardy had told them a good deal less than the whole truth. And from that moment they thought of Al in a new light. Their admiration had changed to affection. They had come to understand that a real hero was of necessity just like Al — simple, kindly, sincere, modest to a fault. They saw heroism in a new light. They understood for the first time that heroism is simply great love expressing itself in doing something for others.

CHAPTER XIX

THE SWIMMING TESTS

THE boys had now been in camp a full three weeks, and there remained only one week more of their stay at Camp Brady. The crowning event of their summer's experiences was to be the canoe voyage downstream.

But before they could embark, each boy, as you will recall, had first to prove himself as a swimmer. With the canoe trip as an incentive, every boy in camp had applied himself diligently. The daily swimming practice had been more than a mere splashing in the water, with fun and shouting. Every boy had had to do his daily swim for distance, his regular battle against the current to gain stamina, his daily swim under water, and his systematic practice in diving.

Moreover, each had had his regular turns at handling a canoe. Long ago the campers had paired off in crews of two and learned to handle their canoes accordingly. These various crews

were made up largely according to the size of the canoeists, two boys of similar size forming a crew. Mr. Hardy had advised this because he said the canoes would be better balanced and better handled if boys of equal size and strength worked together.

This had proved to be a happy arrangement from every point of view. Roy and Johnnie were, of course, inseparable. They were of about the same age and size, and so naturally made one crew. Both were full of sand, both were quick with their wits and their muscles, and they made a team that even the older boys had to respect.

Henry Harper and Lem Haskins were the largest boys in camp, and they formed a second team. They made a good combination. Lem had changed greatly in the short time since Lew was bitten by the copperhead, and every boy in camp saw and admired his fight against his old self. Henry Harper was so much older in his way of thinking that he understood and appreciated Lem's struggles better than any of the others. Henry's nature made him want to help others, and he had come to feel a brotherly interest in Lem. The latter recognized that, and

it drew him to Henry. So these two became daily closer and closer friends. Their association as canoe mates merely added to their growing feeling of friendship.

Between Alec and Jimmy had also grown up a feeling of genuine affection — one of those strange relationships that are often born of common peril. Ever since the day they had been swamped in front of fisherman Jim's they had been inseparable. So they made a third canoe team. Alec had early instructed Jimmy in the finer points of handling a canoe, and the two now made what was probably the most skillful team in camp, though Henry and Lem were a stronger team.

Carl and Lew made a fourth team. Mr. Hardy had decided that Robert Martin and Willie Brown should make a team. That left George Larkin and Charlie Russell for the sixth crew. The camp leaders occupied the seventh boat.

For by this time the campers had a full complement of canoes. They had brought only four, but in anticipation of the trip down river Mr. Hardy had borrowed three other canoes from

friends in Muncy. These had been borrowed for one week each, so the campers now had their full seven canoes.

Mr. Hardy's main interest was in the long distance, under water, and upstream swims. He wanted to see whether or not the boys were prepared to take care of themselves in case of disaster; for he had many times made the trip down river and knew that at certain points it would take skillful handling of the canoes to keep them right side up. If they upset, he wanted to be sure the boys could take care of themselves.

The first test was an under-water swim from the wharf. Each boy dived off and swam as far under water as he could. The swimmers were not required to go any given distance, but merely to show that they knew how to handle themselves under water. Of course every boy swam as far as he could, and each one of the swimmers put many yards between himself and the wharf before his head bobbed up. Every boy made a good showing, but it remained for Robert Martin to do the remarkable. In fact he did it so well that he frightened the campers.

Robert was an expert swimmer for a boy of

his age. He was bulky and almost clumsy on land, but in the water he could get about like a porpoise. He seemed to go along as easily as a fish, and he never tired. Now he took a good breath, dived headlong, and disappeared. The campers began to speculate as to where he would come up. Charley Russell had gone the farthest up to this time.

“He'll beat you, Charley,” cried Roy.

“Sure! He's a whale,” answered Charley.

“Bet he does n't,” yelled George Larkin.

“Bet you he will,” retorted Roy.

By this time Robert should have appeared — at least so it seemed to the campers. Everybody stood still, watching anxiously. It seemed as though minutes went by, but still no head appeared. Then there was a swirl far out in the stream, a head shot up, and a deep gasp for breath could be heard. The swimmer shook the water from his head and turned toward the shore. He had made a tremendous swim.

“You were down so long you frightened us,” said Mr. Hardy as Robert came ashore. “But it was a wonderful swim. How did you do it?”

The answer was lost in the chorus of shouts

that went up from Robert's admiring fellows. "You may be a lobster on land, but you're a regular whale in the water," was Roy's back-handed way of complimenting Robert.

The swim upstream followed next. Each boy was required to go fifty yards. The current was not faster than a mile an hour just here. Each of the boys made the required distance without trouble, though to do so took some of them quite awhile. But the test showed that the swimmers had all acquired stamina in their three weeks of practice.

Lastly came the test in which everybody was most interested. Mr. Hardy had told the boys at the start that nobody could go on the canoe trip who could not swim half the width of the river. That meant a swim of at least a hundred and fifty yards. The older boys were very certain they could make it. The smaller ones were not so confident. But the spirit of the camp was in every one of them. They meant to do it or die. And in three weeks of camp they had come to believe with Henry that, if you really want to do a thing, you can do it. In that belief all had been practicing diligently, but now that the test

was at hand they were not so confident. None the less each one was resolved to do his best.

Mr. Hardy went to the middle of the river and anchored his canoe. That was to be the starting point. Mr. Young took the boys out one at a time in another canoe and paddled beside them as they swam. With the water eight feet deep, the camp leaders were taking no chances.

Henry was the first to make the try. He was a strong swimmer and could easily have gone twice the distance. The other big boys also made the swim without difficulty. Everybody was interested in Lem Haskins' test. Lem was one of the two boys who could not swim when he came to camp. But under the guidance of the camp leaders, Lem had quickly grasped the principles of swimming and had developed rapidly. His muscles, naturally strong, had been disciplined in the new exercise by daily practice. In short he was one of those boys who possess all the powers for doing a thing except that of knowing how. Once he had learned how, the rest came naturally. Now he swam easily, with powerful strokes, with full confidence in

himself. The boys watched him intently. They knew that Lem would make it. They realized that Lem was a boy who was finding himself. He had found his manhood, and all the rest followed as a matter of course. Certainly Camp Brady had done wonderful things for Lem!

Roy Mercer next tried the test. There was never any question as to Roy's ability as a swimmer, but nobody knew how far he could swim. Roy and Willie Brown were the smallest boys in camp. If Roy could make it, the others were sure they could. Roy made it without difficulty. He used his head, swimming slowly and drifting slightly with the current and landing a little below the wharf. But he came in fresh as a daisy. And just to show that he wasn't fatigued he gave a whoop, ran back to the wharf, and dived over. He swam under water farther than he had in his under-water test. Then he came back laughing and happy. He knew he could go on the canoe trip.

Johnnie Lee followed and made the distance easily. Like Roy, he came diagonally with the current, saving his strength. Then came George. He made it all right. Lew Heinsling and Jimmy

Donnelly and Charley Russell followed. There was no question about the ability of any of the others except little Willie Brown. Everybody was wondering if Willie could make it.

Willie answered the question when his turn came by diving off the wharf instead of getting into the canoe with Mr. Young. Day after day Willie had been practicing swimming along the shore while the others played. He knew he could make it. The boys had always teased Willie because he lacked confidence in himself. Indeed there had been reason for their taunts. Yet that had made them none the more pleasant to Willie. Now he had found something he could do. Best of all he *knew* he could do it. The way in which he had acquired confidence in himself as a swimmer was wonderful. Doubt had given place to absolute assurance. And his confidence in this one ability was affecting Willie powerfully. He was beginning to feel confidence in himself along other lines. In short, like Lem, he too was finding himself. With this new confidence came an overwhelming desire to prove his ability, to show the other boys that they were wrong about him, to prove that he was just as able as they were.

And he had made up his mind to do it in the swimming test.

So when he dived off the wharf instead of getting into Mr. Young's waiting canoe, he had his plan already thought out. He paid no attention to Mr. Young's call to get into the canoe, but struck out bravely for the canoe in mid-stream. Mr. Young did not bother him with a second call, but swept his paddle in the water and followed close on Willie's heels. Willie swam slowly but strongly. He had to fight the current a little going out, in order to reach the moored canoe, so he swam quartering, heading slightly upstream. He used an overhand stroke and got a splendid drive out of every kick. Paddling so close behind him, Mr. Young was able to study Willie's movements carefully. He was surprised and pleased at the clean, skillful strokes the lad was making.

"By George!" he muttered to himself, "that boy is going to make a swimmer."

Willie forged ahead, smoothly and easily. He reached the starting boat almost as quickly as any of the others had swum the distance. But instead of grasping the craft and trying to

climb out, he circled it and headed back for shore. Mr. Young swung his boat about in surprise.

“That kid’s got stuff in him,” he said to Mr. Hardy, then followed close in Willie’s wake.

Willie kept on with his clean overhand stroke a little longer, then switched to a breast stroke. Mr. Young saw that he was tiring, and kept the canoe close at hand. Willie swam a little distance with the breast stroke, then rolled over on his back, and simply paddled with his hands. His strength came back quickly, and once more he struck out for shore with his vigorous overhand stroke. He was going with the current now and fostering his strength. He made the remaining distance without once changing his stroke, though he was very tired when he landed.

“I feel as though I could do anything now,” said Willie as he waded ashore and sat down to rest.

“You can,” said Mr. Young. “Don’t ever forget that. You can do anything you want to do, if you want to do it bad enough.” Then he continued: “That was a very wonderful swim, Willie. I congratulate you on it.”

Willie got up and rejoined the others at the wharf. They greeted him with a whoop.

"Who said Willie could n't swim?" cried Roy as he slapped Willie on the back.

"You're a wonder, Willie," said Johnnie. "How'd you do it anyhow?"

Everybody had something to say in praise of Willie's swim. Willie was almost embarrassed by their praises, but at the same time he was wonderfully happy. Their praises were very sweet to him. Willie knew that the boys would never again taunt him because he could n't do things. He had their respect now and *he had earned it*. Certainly Camp Brady had done no less for Willie than it had for Lem.

Soon the tests were ended and the canoes tied up for the night. "I guess you'll do," said Mr. Hardy with an approving smile as he led the way up to camp. "We'll start for Columbia to-morrow."

CHAPTER XX

DOWN THE SUSQUEHANNA IN CANOES

CAMP BRADY was astir the next morning long before the usual time. Al had been instructed to get an early breakfast, and he was up at daybreak. Presently Roy, who was a fox terrier anyway, heard the big cook moving about. Roy was wide-awake in an instant. Then he remembered that it was the day for the canoe trip. Roy gave a war whoop that would have startled a real Indian. It scared sleepy Johnnie into the widest possible wakefulness and brought everybody else tumbling out of bed in a hurry. In an instant Camp Brady was the scene of great activity.

While Al was finishing preparations for breakfast, the campers were getting the duffle ready for the journey. There was not much of this, but what there was had to be carefully divided and packed for convenience in carrying. Each boy was to take his heavy blanket, his palouser,

and his camp knife. Each was to wear a flannel shirt and a broad-brimmed hat. Axes, hatchets, cooking utensils, the necessary dishes (only tin ones were taken), food, and the first-aid kit made up the bulk of the luggage. These articles were packed in several small boxes and bags of convenient size for handling, and distributed evenly among the various canoes. Thus each boat carried one box or bag of duffle, with the blankets and coats of the crew. The camp leaders also slipped their pistols into their pockets. They carried as well the funds for the entire party.

Breakfast was ready before the duffle was entirely packed. The boys fell to with a will, and Al's steaming viands soon disappeared. Then the necessary dishes were washed and added to the packs, the various bundles completed and stowed in the boats, and with a cheer for Al, who was left to care for the camp, the boys of Camp Brady shoved off from the shore and started downstream in a long line, with Alec and Jimmy ahead as pathfinders and the camp leaders as the rear guard, where they could oversee every movement. The orders were for each canoe to keep its appointed place in line and to

stay within twenty-five yards of the canoe ahead. This was to keep the boats from straggling.

Nature must have known in advance that the Camp Brady boys were going on a journey on this particular day. Never was a morning more beautiful. The sun had hardly more than topped the ridge behind the camp when the little flotilla shoved off. The cool of the early morning was still pleasantly noticeable. The mists on the river had not yet dissipated. The wind was still quiet and the unruffled surface of the stream was flecked with myriads of foam clots — children of the rapids that would presently disappear under the hot sun. The mountains below were mirrored distinctly in the river's unbroken surface. The birds were calling to one another cheerily. It seemed as though everything was happy and care free and beautiful. With joyous shouts the paddlers hailed one another, and their shouts were flung back by the wooded hills and echoed and reëchoed. But their cries did not seem discordant. They seemed to blend with the rest of nature's glad chorus, and the camp leaders smiled approval at their happy charges.

Alec had been instructed to take it easy. The

day's journey was to be more than twenty miles, and though it was all with the current, the camp leaders knew that long before the day was over legs would be cramped and arms tired, even at the easiest of paces. Alec felt all the thrill and ardor of the moment and wanted to "cut loose." But Alec was by this time too good a soldier not to obey orders. Besides, he realized that as pathfinder he was responsible for bringing the party to camp safe and sound—and that meant in good shape for another day's paddling. So he bravely put aside the desire to try a sprint, and led the party at an easy, swinging pace that would have done credit to an old voyager.

The channel was near the Camp Brady side of the river, so Alec kept within fifty yards of the shore. The party reached fisherman Jim's in no time. The old fellow was standing in the door of his cabin. He waved a friendly greeting and the boys answered with the Camp Brady cheer.

Below fisherman Jim's rose the steep cliff where Carl had faced the copperhead. This great hill now completely hid the sun and sent grateful shadows half across the river. Already

the campers were getting hot, and Alec led the way into this shade with a feeling of pleasure. How grateful it was! The great gray rocks, still damp with dew, looked cool and attractive.

A mile and a half below Carl's chimney rock the party came to the remains of an old dam. Three quarters of a century ago, when traffic canals were first being used in this country, this dam was built to provide water for a canal that here entered the river. But after the railroads were built this canal was no longer used. So the dam had first fallen into decay and then been destroyed by the owners to get the timber in it. The foundations remained, however, and still raised the upstream water some two or three feet. It was this backed-up water that covered the Warrior's Spring and made the current so gentle at Camp Brady.

Just below the dam was a long stretch of shoal, now covered with summer growths of green. Years ago, as Mr. Hardy had already told the boys, this shoal had been a high island of seven or eight acres. Here the pioneers had a famous shad fishery, for before the Susquehanna was obstructed by dams shad swam clear to the head-

waters annually to spawn. At this fishery early settlers had caught as many as twenty-five hundred shad at one haul of a seine. But those wise settlers always threw the roe shad back into the river and so insured a plentiful supply of fish for the future. As the campers neared the broken dam and the little shoal they remembered this story and saw anew evidence of the terrible power of floods. Upstream they had seen where broad acres of the mainland had been washed away. Here they saw where a great island had vanished before the awful rush of the swollen river.

The river was pouring over the broken dam in a fierce little torrent, but Alec easily found an opening where the water appeared safe and led the way through it. He had judged correctly, and the canoes shot, one after another, through this opening into the smooth water below.

Here the current continued its quickened way. Soon the voyagers passed the little town of Montgomery, which could be seen so plainly from Camp Brady. They saw a little creek, beautiful beneath arching trees, that here poured

its contribution into the River of Shining Water, as the Indians called the larger stream in their word Susquehanna. This tributary was the Black Hole Creek, so reminiscent in its name of those early, dark days of struggle and privation. Below this lay Penny Hill, as a sort of frame or background for Montgomery, while the Muncy Hills still towered aloft on their own side of the river.

Very wonderful was the Susquehanna now, with its deep pools and sparkling shallows, its placid reaches and rushing rapids. Frequent islands begemmed it. These were overgrown with trees, mostly water birches along the banks and hardwoods in the interiors, and so had been able to withstand the floods. They were very beautiful. Prosperous farms dotted the landscape and little hamlets appeared at intervals. White Deer Hole Creek was passed. A few miles below the party came to White Deer Creek. Here Mr. Hardy gave the signal to stop. The party had come ten miles or more and everybody was hot and tired. The wide, smooth mouth of the tributary, shaded by rows of great, over-arching trees, looked very inviting indeed. Alec

was glad enough to turn his prow into this welcoming harbor. In a few minutes seven canoes were drawn up on the bank and the party were stretched out luxuriantly on the grass. They intended to eat their dinner and wait till the heat of day was past before voyaging further.

The afternoon's run was without incident. When the sun began to slip down the western side of the sky, Alec led the party forth, well rested and eager to proceed. The flotilla passed several towns. Just below the largest of these towns a bold headland jutted out on the western bank. Mr. Hardy signaled to the canoes to close up, and when the seven craft had come together, he pointed to this headland.

"This is a part of the very first farm sold in Buffalo valley by the Penns," he said. "Its first owner was a settler named Michael Wieland. He got his farm in 1769 and moved here with his family. Other settlers came, and in a few years scattered cabins could be seen along the river from what is now Sunbury up as far as the present city of Williamsport. You have all read of the Wyoming massacre, during the Revolution, when a force of British and Indians

led by Sir William Johnson descended upon that little settlement on the other branch of the Susquehanna and massacred the settlers in cold blood, after the latter had surrendered under a promise of protection. That was in 1779. The massacre incited the Indians to the most awful deeds, and the scattered settlers throughout this entire region had to flee for their lives.

“By this time old Michael Wieland was dead, but his son Michael and a companion, John Bashor, tried to escape downstream in a canoe. Almost at this very spot the Indians fired upon them as they were paddling away. Bashor was killed outright. Young Wieland was shot through the jaw, but he kept on paddling and got away.

“Down the river fled all the dwellers in this whole Susquehanna Valley. They came in canoes, in flatboats, in anything at all that would float. The woods were full of Indians and their only safety was on the river. The settlers left their homes, their cattle, their household goods — everything that they had, in fact — and fled down the Susquehanna as fast as they could go. Some of them later came back. Some never re-

turned, and so lost the fruits of their labor in clearing the wilderness."

"Did Michael Wieland come back?" asked George Larkin.

"Not for many years," answered Mr. Hardy. "He had been a soldier in the Continental Army and was home on a furlough at the time of the Great Runaway, as this flight was called. He went back to the army to help Washington."

The party now proceeded downstream again. A few miles farther they came to Buffalo Creek, which drains the great Buffalo Valley, that is so called because it is the easternmost point at which the American bison were found. Here the town of Lewisburg is located. The boys set up a cry of recognition as the college hill came into view at the lower end of the town.

Two miles downstream Alec, following Mr. Hardy's directions, headed for the east bank of the river. Suddenly he came upon the broad mouth of another tributary. It was the Chillisquaque Creek — "the Place of the Snowbirds." Alec led the little flotilla up this beautiful stream for two or three hundred yards, where, at Mr. Hardy's order, the canoes were drawn up on the

north bank and camp established in an open field under an enormous hickory tree.

Rich farm lands extended up and down the river. Inland at a distance of half a mile rose Mount Montour, so called after Andrew Montour, a half-breed trapper and guide who served the pioneers well, giving them many a timely warning of Indian forays.

Now came a cooling swim. Supper was soon over and driftwood was piled on the flames. But the voyagers were too sleepy to care about a camp fire. Twenty miles of paddling had made them ready "to hit the hay," as Roy put it, and darkness had hardly descended before twelve tired boys were asleep on the soft turf under the hickory tree, snugly wrapped in their blankets. Lightning was flashing in the western skies and the dull rumble of thunder could be heard by the time the camp leaders sought their places under the hickory; but the storm did not come near the little party at the foot of old Montour.

Again an early start was made next morning, though this time the campers were not quite so blithesome. Twenty miles of paddling had left every one of them with muscles a little sore.

But Alec led the way slowly and this stiffness soon wore off. Two beautiful islands were passed, on both of which were comfortable summer cottages. The cottagers gave the boys a friendly hail and received a cheer in return.

Up to this point no difficulty had been experienced, although the river was very low. Now great shoals began to bother the canoeists and submerged ledges of rock made progress difficult. There was hardly water enough to navigate. Several times the boys had to step overboard and pull their canoes over the shallow places. They peeled their shoes and stockings off and were glad of the excuse to get into the cool water.

Soon they came to enormous railroad shops and freight yards on the left. This was the new Pennsylvania Railroad yard at Northumberland. Just across the stream a towering cliff rose almost straight up. Mr. Hardy directed the boys to a certain part of the river, from which, looking upward, they could distinctly see a great stone face projecting from the brow of the hill.

"This promontory is known as Shikelimy," said Mr. Hardy, "after one of the most famous

chieftains of the Six Nations. The stone face yonder is called Shikelimy's face. That wise chieftain ruled over all this region in the days when the white men were first coming. He was friendly to them, and as long as he lived the Indians dared not murder and scalp the white men. Shikelimy dwelt in the Indian village of Shamokin, which was just yonder, where now stands the city of Sunbury."

The campers were coming straight toward a city. Apparently the river ended abruptly here. In a few minutes they swept under a bridge and then they understood. They had reached the mouth of the West Branch, which here joins the North Branch at a right angle, like the stem to a capital letter T. The junction of the two rivers formed a magnificent stream three quarters of a mile in width.

"Over there," said Mr. Hardy, for the canoes had advanced in close formation, "was old Fort Augusta." He pointed to the Sunbury shore. "It was built, as you will notice, so as to command both branches of the river. It was the most important frontier fort in all this region. It was from Fort Augusta, you will recall, that

Colonel Hartley started on the trip to destroy Tioga. He returned along the North Branch. In 1756 the French and Indians came down our branch of the river to try to capture Fort Augusta. But when they got up on top of Shikelimy Hill and saw what a strong place the fort was, they started back without ever firing a shot. They had a cannon which impeded their flight greatly. When they reached a certain deep pool in the river some miles above Camp Brady, they threw their cannon overboard. To this day the place is known as the cannon hole."

The party were now floating on the broad bosom of the Big River, as the stream is known by river folk after the junction of the two branches. They passed under the railroad bridge, over which they had come on their way from Central City, under a great driving bridge, and came presently to another broken dam. They shot the rapids formed by the dam, without difficulty, and soon found themselves in a wonderful chain of islands. The mountains rose on either hand, abruptly to the left, at a little distance from the shore on the right. Houses were few in number. It began to seem like the

primal wilderness. They voyaged between the eternal hills, threading their way through silent, narrow passages as they picked their course among the islands.

"It's just like discovering a new country, is n't it?" said Roy to Johnnie.

And he was right. The stillness was unbroken. There was little to remind them of civilization. They had suddenly slipped from the busy haunts of men into the solitude of the wilderness. They had exchanged the belching smokestacks of industry for the lofty columns of the forest trees. It was a magic change and it filled every boy with delight. So they paddled on with real enjoyment until Mr. Hardy signaled to Alec to make for the right bank of the river. Soon they came to the mouth of the most beautiful tributary they had yet seen — the wide, placid mouth of Penn's Creek. They had covered more than fifteen miles. Now they paddled up the creek a distance to a spring and there debarked for their noonday meal.

The creek was very muddy. Also it was noticeably swollen. The storm of the previous night had raised its waters.

"I'm mighty glad of it," said Mr. Hardy, after calling his colleague's attention to the swollen stream. "When we stuck on the shallows above Sunbury, I knew we were in for trouble. Low water there means a bad time at McKee's Half Falls. This rise in Penn's Creek will help us along."

It did, not only by raising the level of the Big River, but in another way that Mr. Hardy had not foreseen. The muddy water from the creek edged the blue surface of the Susquehanna with a turbid brown ribbon perhaps twenty-five yards wide. The line of demarcation between the clear water and this muddy flow by the shore was as plain as a pencil mark.

At McKee's, some eight miles downstream, the river falls twelve feet. Parallel ledges of rock, running diagonally from mountain to mountain, here dam back the mile-wide stream. Across most of its width the river has eaten great openings in these ledges, leaving numerous slabs of rock that stand up in rows like tombstones. But close beside the right bank the sweep of the river has torn away all these up-standing rocks, leaving only submerged ledges,

over which the water pours down to the lower level in a series of great combers. It makes a fierce rush of water. Here the passage must be made. Some hundred yards below these falls a great rocky shoal projects far out into the river, shunting the boiling current toward midstream at a sharp angle. After shooting the falls, therefore, it is necessary for the canoeist to make sharply for the middle of the river. The swirling currents and choppy waves call for good watermanship.

The little flotilla approached the falls and drew up on the bank some yards above them. Mr. Hardy took the boys ashore. They went downstream and scrambled down the rocks to the water's edge. Here they could see the river tumbling downward toward them. The roar of the rapids was deafening. It was a little terrifying too. In the midst of the tossing waves there was one little lane of smooth water. This was their course. It came straight over the falls, then bent outward toward midstream. From their vantage point below the falls this path was clear enough. But from upstream it would be quite another thing to pick it out. And safety

lay in following this path absolutely. Just here is where their good fortune entered. The line of demarcation between the muddy water and the clear followed this smooth water exactly. Mr. Hardy noted the fact with pleasure.

“Stick to the edge of the muddy water,” he shouted, “and you will be all right. Do you understand?” Every boy in the party shouted back “Yes!” Then they climbed silently back up the rocks and made their way to the boats.

By the time they were embarking, a ring of villagers had collected about the canoes.

“You can’t make it,” shouted one of them.

“A canoe went through yesterday and upset,” shouted another.

“We’ll try it,” replied Mr. Hardy.

He knew that the little flood from Penn’s Creek would carry them through. He was too experienced a waterman to be fooled.

And Mr. Hardy was right. For when Alec shoved off, after receiving a few words of instructions, he went sailing down the rapids as though there were fathoms of river beneath him. The water arched over the first ledge of rock in a glassy sheet, to be thrown back in a huge, curl-

ing comber, the first of a series of great waves. Alec's boat shot over this glassy water like a dream craft, then suddenly came to life, dipped downward, and shot into the comber as though it would dive clear under it. Jimmy saw the great wave coming straight at him. It frightened him a little, but he gritted his teeth and kept on paddling. The bow of the canoe dived into the smother and water swept over the bow. It wet Jimmy's legs. But the boat shot through the comber and on into another wave and another, all the time dancing about, jumping up and down, lurching to right or left like a frightened living creature. At first it was a little terrifying. But Jimmy kept his balance by bracing his knees against the sides of the canoe and steadying himself with his paddle. After the first shock he began to enjoy it. Once more the canoe dipped and took in water, but now Jimmy did not mind. He knew the boat would ride over the waves like a duck. This was only a little spray thrown up over it. He began to exult in the fast passage, to feel the joy of combat, to experience the call of the wild that slumbers in the heart of each one of us. He voiced

his feelings in a great whoop. Then he heard Alec behind him shouting, "Pull for the middle!"

He bent to his paddling. The boat shot outward along the edge of the muddy water and went racing downstream at a terrific pace. "Head her in!" he heard Alec shouting a little later. They forced the boat toward the shore and up into the shoal water where they could hold her, just as Mr. Hardy had told them to do, so they could be of assistance if anyone upset.

But when they looked upstream everything was all right. The canoes were plunging after them in a long line. Mr. Hardy's canoe was just coming down the falls, and the boys watched it with breathless interest as it plunged through the combers.

They were astonished at the distance they had come. The passage had taken them only a minute or two, but already they were far down the stream. Mr. Hardy's canoe looked small and the ring of spectators that had gathered to see them shoot the falls looked like children. But almost before they had time to note these things the other canoes were shooting past

them, and they had to shove off and paddle hard to regain their place at the head of the party.

Below the falls the river narrowed perceptibly, the water continued to rush along at a fast pace, and in a very few minutes Alec saw the opening in the trees along the bank that marked the mouth of the Mahantango Creek, a mile and three quarters below the falls. This was to be their camping place for the night. They had come twenty-three miles and were glad enough to stop paddling. Even the joy of exploration and the excitement of shooting rapids cannot overcome the fatigue born of hard paddling on a hot August day.

Early morning again found the camp astir. The air was fresh and cool and everything was spangled with dew. It was good just to be alive. Camp had been established on a tiny island in the mouth of the creek. Mr. Hardy gave some of the boys tin pails and sent them to the mainland. Some walked upstream a few hundred yards and returned with their pails dripping with cold, clear well water. Others climbed a worm fence surrounding a pasture field and

brought back delicious wild berries. These were welcome additions to the usual fare.

The flotilla got under way as soon as possible, for the journey, lengthening each day, would to-day take them twenty-eight miles, and they wanted to cover as many miles as possible before the sun grew hot. The morning's journey was without incident. It led them through a region of mountains, which often rose up from the water like giant portals. A chain of islands added charm to the river. At Liverpool the river narrowed to half a mile and went curving round a great mountain, pouring fiercely among the thousands of rocks with which its bed was fairly peppered.

Alec led the way slowly, keeping well out from the shore. But even this precaution did n't prevent his canoe from going on a sunken rock. An upward-thrusting pinnacle of rock smashed the cedar planking in the middle of his craft and held the boat fast. Luckily it did not penetrate the canvas. Alec crawled forward over the luggage while Jimmy steadied the boat. That tilted the stern up and released the canoe. The others avoided the hidden danger.

The current bore them along rapidly, for the river fell fast below Liverpool. They passed a summer resort and were greeted with shouts from the pleasure seekers. They rushed past the portals of Berry Mountain, where the river has gnawed a passage straight through the giant hill. Then they came to slower water, where the river is backed up by the great dam at Clark's Ferry. On the upstream end of Haldeman Island they halted for rest and the midday meal. They were ready for both. They had come seventeen miles — almost as far as they had traveled on the whole of their first day — and they had eleven miles yet to go.

They lounged under the big trees along the island's edge until well into the afternoon. Then Mr. Hardy gave the order and they shoved off. Haldeman Island is three miles long. Just below it is the great dam. Immediately below the dam the Juniata — the blue Juniata famed in song and story — comes pouring into the Susquehanna. The canoeists drew up to the right bank, close to the dam, and carried their craft across the point of land separating the two streams. It was a portage of hardly more than

seventy-five yards. Then they pushed off into the fast waters of the Juniata and went shooting back into the Big River, now made bigger than ever. They crossed straight over to the left bank, shooting through the swirls and rapids below the big dam.

The course now took them close to this bank. In places they could almost touch with their paddles the rocks that jutted out from the shore. The river ran fast and they went gliding along at good speed. Indeed it was hardly necessary to paddle at all, and the boys were glad to take it easy. Long before the sun had sunk they drew their boats up on a little bit of sward just above the Rockville Bridge, a mammoth highway with forty-eight arches, the greatest stone bridge in the world. Here, as they made camp and turned in for the night, they watched the great trains of the Pennsylvania Railroad thunder over the bridge, to go steaming up the valley of the Juniata, where savages and floods have left another record of death, and on to Pittsburgh, where Braddock met his miserable end.

CHAPTER XXI

HENRY'S FIGHT FOR LIFE

NOW came the last day of the trip. Thirty miles were to be covered to-day, and covered with little rest; for the party was scheduled to catch an afternoon train at Columbia that would bear them back to Camp Brady that night. So they were afloat early. They paddled under the great stone bridge and on to Harrisburg, five miles from their starting point. The river was magnificent, hemmed in by picturesque, wooded mountains and set with frequent emerald islands.

At Harrisburg Henry and Lem drew up at the foot of a roadway that led upward from the water's edge. Lem got ashore. He had an aunt living here and he had asked for permission to pay her a visit. Henry very willingly agreed to let Lem go, saying that he could keep up with the other canoes. Lem was to join the party at the railroad station as they came through Harris-

burg on the way back to camp. He climbed the steep roadway up to the level of the city and turned to wave a farewell. None of the canoes except his own had stopped, though George wanted to have a look at the state capitol. All were now some distance downstream and Henry was bringing up the rear of the procession alone. He had delayed to lash Lem's paddle fast. The boys waved their hands in answer to Lem and kept on in this order.

It was still early in the day. The sun was coming up hot, but the wind was rising too, blowing cool and clear from the west. It tempered the heat and made it possible to keep on with little rest. By this time, also, the voyagers were hardened to their task, and Alec led the way at a pretty stiff pace.

The party soon passed the city and shortly came to Steelton, with its myriad tall chimneys belching out black smoke. Highspire and Middletown followed in succession. The river was now a broad sheet in the center of a great valley. There were rolling hills on each side, but the high mountains were gone. The country became less picturesque. After the wonderful scenery

the boys had been feasting their eyes upon, the region seemed flat and uninteresting. The sun poured down hotter and hotter. But the wind also kept getting stronger and made it possible for the paddlers to keep doggedly on. But the pleasure was gone. Under the circumstances canoeing became work, and hard work at that. Yet nobody grumbled. The stay at Camp Brady had put the right spirit into each boy's heart. Henry managed to keep up pretty well, though gradually the sheet of water between his own and Mr. Hardy's canoe grew wider and wider.

Now they passed several more little towns. A distant, dull roaring began to fill the air. The flotilla was approaching the Conewago Falls. Here the river, normally a mile wide, narrows fully a third by reason of an island lying in mid-stream. At the same time the bed of the river falls away rapidly, making a sharp incline more than a mile in length. Down this narrowed passage rushes almost the entire volume of the river. Long before it reaches the spot the river quickens its pace and comes dancing merrily down to this frightful vortex. From a gentle

purring its voice rises to a roar that fills the heavens.

The falls are studded with rocks. Some lurk beneath the surface, and over these the water plunges in fearful combers. Others thrust their cruel heads above the water and throw aside the rushing waves in swirling cross-currents and treacherous eddies. The water rushes downward in awful confusion. It pulls at the rocks as though trying to drag them up by the roots. It swirls around them with a horrible sucking sound. In places the waters come together with the boom of a cannon, throwing up giant breakers. Foam and spray, flung high by the terrific impact of wave against wave or billow against rock, fill the air. The water leaps and bounds and turns and twists in a thousand directions.

When the river is swollen, it lashes itself into indescribable fury. When it is low, as it was now, it is even more awful. Its uncovered rocks thrust upward like the bared teeth of hungry wolves. A canoe could not live in this maelstrom for an instant. None but the hardest of lumbermen on the stanchest of log rafts dare attempt its passage, and then only when the water is high

and the wind low. And long is the tale of victims that the river has taken even from these hardy voyagers.

On the right bank of the river just here stands a power house. By paddling into its power canal and carrying round its dam, the journey downstream can be continued with ease and safety. This Mr. Hardy planned to do. He had kept to the left bank as long as he thought wise, to take advantage of the stronger current. Now it was time to cross the river before the current grew too strong. Mr. Hardy turned in his seat and shouted back at Henry: "Make for the other bank!"

He pointed with his paddle, and though the wind carried his words away, Henry understood and waved his paddle in reply. He swung his bow sharply for the other shore and bent to his task. Mr. Hardy saw that Henry was headed right, then turned to his own paddling. From time to time he looked around. Henry was still headed right.

But though he was headed right, he was making little progress. His bow was high out of water, so that the wind caught it and swung it

powerfully. To make any headway at all, Henry had to keep bow on to the wind. It took so much effort merely to keep headed right that Henry made little progress. He had advanced not quite halfway across the river when a sudden puff of wind swung him completely around. He fought fiercely to turn about, and finally succeeded. But the struggle left him tired. All the time the roar of the rapids grew louder and louder.

Now Henry noticed with alarm that the current was becoming much faster. For every yard he advanced toward the shore he was swept several yards downstream. Henry did not really feel frightened until he was more than halfway across. Then he suddenly noticed that the upper end of the island was dangerously near. A slight turn in the river mercifully hid the falls from him. But he knew they were close at hand. The tumult of the waters now filled the heavens.

Just at this time Mr. Hardy discovered Henry's plight. In one glance he saw that Henry would surely go into the falls unless help reached him. The camp leader whirled his craft about so suddenly he almost upset Mr. Young.

"Look at Henry!" he shouted.

Mr. Young took in the situation at a glance. The two men paddled frantically toward their struggling comrade. The wind was behind them now and they fairly shot through the water. But Henry was far out in the stream, where the current was strongest. Long before the camp leaders got near Henry they saw it was too late. They could not save him. They might not even be able to save themselves.

Again Mr. Hardy swung the canoe. With desperation the two leaders dug their paddles into the waves. These were now dancing high. They barely managed to reach the end of the island. They were safe. But when they turned to look, Henry had vanished from sight. With leaden hearts they rushed across the island and on down the power canal to the foot of the falls, to look for their lost comrade. At least they must recover Henry's body.

Fishermen were whipping the stream below the falls, but none of them had seen either a canoe or a body. There was nothing that could be done but wait till the river gave up its dead. So the party, for all had now made the circuit of the

falls, sat in silent agony and watched the cruel waters that had snatched away their comrade.

But Henry, though near death, was not dead. When he saw that help could not reach him, he headed his boat straight into the rapids and made a valiant effort to shoot them. The waves were running five feet high and coming from all directions. Two breakers, rushing together, met above him just as a third lifted the stern of his canoe. The boat was flung from under him and he was buried under tons of water. For half a minute he was submerged. When he came to the surface, Henry could see nothing of canoe or paddle. Then he began a gallant fight for his life.

Choked and blinded by the boiling waters, he fought to gain the island. The current swept him along at a terrible pace. Every few yards a giant breaker overwhelmed him, spinning him over and over until he did not know whether he was swimming for the surface or the bottom of the river. He could not see. He could hardly breathe. He swallowed quantities of water. He choked and became weak. The waves tossed him about like a cork. Good fortune alone kept

him from striking a rock. One such blow on his head would have ended it all. Frequently he touched rocks with his hands. He tried to cling to them. The current tore him away. Once he barely avoided a whirlpool that would have sucked him down like a straw.

He became so sick and weak he could fight no longer. And then, just as he was giving up, he struck a barely submerged rock. With a last despairing effort he dragged himself up on it and lay prone. He was deathly sick and not able to lift his head. But after a time his strength partly returned. He sat upright and looked about. The current had carried him near to the island. The waves, though still rough and choppy, were smoother than in midstream. Below him, but nearer to the island, was another flat rock. Henry slipped into the water and fought his way to this rock. He was now near to the island. Again he rested. Then nerving himself for a final struggle, he once more plunged into the stream and fought desperately to gain the shore. He was almost exhausted when his feet touched bottom. He rested against rocks, fought his way inch by inch through the turbu-

lent current, and finally dropped in utter exhaustion on the bank of the island.

It was several minutes before he could stand. He staggered downstream, along the edge of the island. Presently something long and flat caught his eye. It was barely submerged and not fifty feet from the shore. It was his own canoe, stranded bottom up on a rock.

Henry looked at it a long time. He saw that the water was not deep. Finally he waded into the river, and swimming and wading, made his way from rock to rock and out to his boat. He managed to turn it over and get most of the water emptied out of it. His coat and blanket were gone, as well as the box of duffle. But Lem's paddle was still there. Henry cut it loose with his knife. Then he got into the canoe and steered it close to the island. He had not strength enough left to paddle. But here the waves were comparatively smooth, and although he shipped some water, Henry came through the rest of the falls in safety.

When his companions saw him riding out of the maelstrom, they could hardly believe their eyes. Mr. Hardy, more thankful than he had

ever been before in his life, paddled out and towed Henry's canoe ashore. He wrapped Henry in blankets and made him lie down in the shade of a tree. He gave him a little aromatic spirits of ammonia. Meantime Lew had a fire going in a jiffy. In no time the coffeepot was boiling. Henry was given food and a stimulating drink of the coffee. The others ate their midday meal. They were very sober. Death had been very close to them.

As soon as Henry was rested the party went on. Henry rode in Mr. Hardy's canoe, his own being towed behind. They had still a dozen miles to go. They passed a number of small towns and in ample time reached Columbia, where they were to take the train for Muncy.

Presently their train came steaming in. Their canoes were piled into the baggage car, nearly filling it. At Harrisburg Lem joined them and heard from awed lips the story of Henry's escape.

"And it all happened because he was trying to do me a kindness," said Lem. "I seem to cause nothing but trouble, and yet everybody is kind to me."

Mr. Hardy smiled happily as he overheard

this remark. He knew it indicated a great change in heart.

For nearly three hours the party steamed up the stream down which they had so pleasantly journeyed. They reached Muncy, this time at another station across the river from Muncy. It was four miles to Camp Brady. But before the boys realized this fact they saw Mr. Robinson and Teddy in a great big farm wagon, waiting for them. They piled into the big wagon, leaving the canoes for another day, and the trip back was enlivened by a spirited recital of their adventures for Teddy's benefit.

Another surprise was in store for them. Instead of driving up to camp, Mr. Robinson drew up at his own door and the boys were ushered into the farmhouse for a meal such as only Mrs. Robinson could prepare and that tasted especially good after four days of their own cooking. After supper the trip was described again for Mrs. Robinson's benefit, and thus happily ended the hundred-mile canoe trip down the Susquehanna.

CHAPTER XXII

FAREWELL TO CAMP BRADY

THE last night in camp was celebrated by a big camp fire and a special "feed." The axe brigade had prepared triple the usual quantity of wood for the fire. Roasting ears and potatoes had been brought up from the farm. And Al had spent most of the day preparing goodies for this farewell feast. The borrowed canoes had been returned to their owners, the other craft had been crated and shipped home, and everything that could be packed in advance had been gotten ready. There remained only the dismantling of the tents, and the packing of cots and dishes, and Camp Brady would be no more. It had been a wonderful month and the boys were going to make this last night a memorable one. Mr. and Mrs. Robinson and Teddy had been invited to join in the fun.

Never was there another such camp fire. For more than an hour it flamed high, making the

clearing as light as day. The boys sang and cheered. They played games in the bright light. Mr. Hardy told them stories. And when the fire had burned low, the roasting ears and the potatoes were put in the bed of hot coals. Al disappeared for a few minutes and came back with some flat, chunky things that looked like elongated mud pies, which he hastily buried in the glowing coals. When Roy asked him what he had, he merely smiled and said wait and see. While they were waiting, Mr. Young kept the party laughing by his stories of college life and pranks.

Presently Al raked away some of the coals and thrust the blade of his knife into an uncovered potato.

"Done to a turn," he announced, and began to dig out the potatoes and roasting ears. Lastly he drew forth his mud pies, now baked hard. Al laid them on a board, while everybody looked on in wonder. Suddenly Roy gave a whoop.

"I know what they are," he shouted. "They're fish. That's the way the Indians used to cook them."

Roy was right, as Al showed in a moment

when he knocked off the baked mud and exhibited a number of beautiful steaming bass, wrapped in leaves of the sassafras and the hickory. The fish were fit for a king. Al split them in halves and gave each one present a piece of the delicious meat. He had caught the fish quietly during the day and kept them alive in the spring box until he wanted to cook them. No one present had ever tasted a fish half so good. With the potatoes and the corn and the other good things Al had prepared, Camp Brady had a feast long to be remembered.

All of a sudden everybody became quiet. Nobody spoke a word, yet everybody knew what everybody else was thinking about. To-morrow was the last day of camp, the day of parting. The boys could not bear to think of leaving the spot where they had passed such a happy month. Mr. and Mrs. Robinson had become very fond of the campers, for they were manly little fellows and they were such fine company for Teddy. Mr. Hardy they loved almost like a son. And as for Teddy, he could hardly keep the tears back at the thought of parting. He sat by Lew with his head down and his face very sober.

"We never could have come if it had n't been for Mr. Hardy," Lew said to him.

"Of course you could n't," replied Teddy.

"He's a fine leader," said Lew.

"He's a hero," returned Teddy.

"Of course," answered Lew.

"But I mean a real hero," said Teddy, "like Al. He won't let me tell anybody, but I'm going to tell you anyway. You tell the others."

Teddy whispered in Lew's ear, while Lew's eyes opened wider and wider. And before sleep descended upon Camp Brady that night the news flew swiftly from tent to tent that Mr. Hardy had jumped overboard in a flood, when the river was jammed with floe ice, which was as dangerous as a log jam and lots colder, and saved Teddy's life after a terrible struggle. And Camp Brady fell asleep proudly conscious that it contained two real, flesh and blood heroes. Certainly there never was a camp like this.

While Teddy was whispering his forbidden story to Lew, Mr. Robinson was saying anxiously to Mr. Hardy, "You're coming back next year, are n't you, James?"

"Well, now, I shall be very busy next sum-

mer," began Mr. Hardy, but Mrs. Robinson cut him short.

"We simply won't take no for an answer," she said. "Teddy has grown so fond of the boys, and it has been so good to see you once more. You must come back."

Mr. Hardy was thoughtful for a moment.

"Well, now, I might," he began. Then he turned to the ring of faces about the fire.

"What about it, boys?" he asked. "Shall we come back next summer? Mr. Robinson wants us to."

"Yes, yes," shouted the boys.

Mr. Hardy was silent for a little.

"There are certain difficulties in the way," he said at last. "Nearly everything we have here is borrowed. I should not care to ask for the things a second time. If we buy an outfit like this, it will cost a lot of money. Are you willing to work during the winter to earn that money? If you are, we can go camping as many summers as we like."

"Yes indeed," cried the campers. "We'll earn it."

And every boy there pledged himself to earn

forty dollars before the next summer. And so it was settled that the Camp Brady boys were to become a permanent organization and that the journey home on the morrow was not really a farewell to Camp Brady after all, but merely a temporary leave-taking.

"A year ain't so long," said Roy.

"It ain't any too long when you've got to earn forty dollars," replied Johnnie, and everybody laughed.

"If we come back next year, I think Teddy ought to be a camper," said Lew.

"Can I, father?" asked Teddy.

"Yes, Teddy," replied Mr. Robinson.

The boys gave a shout, for they all loved Teddy.

And so it was settled that the campers were to come back the next summer and that Teddy was to be one of them.

The Robinsons smiled with happiness at the thought. They said good night and started for home.

"Wait a minute," said Mr. Hardy. Then turning to the boys, he called: "Palousers everybody."

In a minute twelve miniature searchlights were flashing, and the Robinson family was escorted safely home, with six bright little lights shining on either side of them as they walked through the now shorn wheat field. The boys gave them a good-night cheer at the farmhouse door, and soon afterward twelve happy boys were fast asleep. They were to come back next year! They were to see dear old Camp Brady once more! No wonder they were happy.

Then came an early breakfast after dreamless slumber, a few hours' work in packing, a final cheer for the Robinsons, and a last hike to the station. Two hours later the party were back in Central City, brown and happy and overflowing with stories of the wonderful days at Camp Brady. They gave the camp cheer as they separated at the Y.M.C.A. building.

"Three more cheers for Roy," called Johnnie. "The camp was his idea."

The cheers were given with a will.

"An idea is a useful thing sometimes," laughed Roy, and the party disbanded.

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